

Personal Protective Equipment Procedure	1 of 12	Approval Date: 10.10.2025
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Version Number: 2	Previous Reference Number: <i>UHB 493</i>
IMS-09-01 CAV: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT PROCEDURE	
Introduction and aims This procedure aims to ensure that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is appropriately provided, properly maintained, and safely used in line with the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2022 and other applicable legislation—such as the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations. Its objective is to reduce the risk of injury to staff working within the University Health Board (UHB).	
Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conduct Suitable Risk Assessments.</i> Ensure that comprehensive and appropriate risk assessments are carried out across all relevant work areas, in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Where risks cannot be adequately controlled through other measures, suitable, sufficient, and compatible PPE must be provided to employees who may be exposed to hazards affecting their health or safety. • <i>Ensure PPE Suitability and Compatibility.</i> PPE must be of appropriate quality and fit for the identified risks and conditions of exposure. It should consider ergonomic factors, be capable of fitting the wearer correctly, be adjustable where necessary, and be compatible with other PPE items to avoid increasing overall risk. • <i>Provide Training, Storage, and Maintenance.</i> Adequate training must be provided to ensure correct use of PPE. Procedures must also be in place for the proper storage, maintenance, and inspection of PPE to ensure its continued effectiveness and safety. 	
Scope of procedure This procedure applies to all staff across all UHB locations, including individuals with honorary contracts, agency staff, and, where applicable, external contractors. It should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the All-Wales Infection Prevention and Control (IP&C) Manual , which provide detailed guidance on PPE usage in relation to infection prevention and control.	
Equality and Health Impact Assessment	An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed. This is because the procedure has been written to support implementation of the Health and Safety Policy. The Equality Impact Assessment completed for the Policy found there to be no impact.
Documents to read alongside this Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UHB 021 - Health and Safety Policy • UHB 089 - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Procedure • National Infection Prevention & Control Manual (NIPCM) • UHB 127 - Latex Allergy Policy • UHB 466 – Control of Hand Arm Vibration (HAV) Exposure at Work Procedure • UHB 467 Risk Assessment Procedure – Health and Safety
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Group with authority to approve procedures written to explain how this policy will be implemented	Operational Health and Safety Group
Accountable Executive or Clinical Board Director	Executive Director of People and Culture
Author	Health and Safety Adviser
<u>Disclaimer</u> If the review date of this document has passed, please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the Governance Directorate	

Summary of reviews/amendments			
Version Number	Date Review Approved	Date Published	Summary of Amendments
1	07/12/2021	14/01/2022	This is a new document.
2	10.10.2025	21.10.2025	Periodic review with minor amendments.

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1 Introduction

The UHB acknowledges its legal responsibility to comply with The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 2022.

In accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the UHB will ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are conducted across all relevant work environments. These assessments will identify appropriate control measures to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

Where risks cannot be adequately controlled in line with the hierarchy of control (Risk Assessment procedure), the UHB will provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as a last line of defence or interim solution in line with regulatory requirements.

This Procedure describes the arrangements in place to comply with the above regulations and to ensure that PPE is used only where it is the last line of defence and it is selected, used, stored, inspected and maintained as required, to be and remain effective.

This procedure does not cover items such as uniforms provided for the primary purpose of presenting our corporate image, and ordinary working clothes. However, where any uniform or clothing protects against a specific risk to health and safety, for example high visibility clothing, it is included as PPE. Waterproof, weatherproof or insulated clothing is also classed as PPE, if it is worn to protect employees against risks to their health or safety, but not otherwise.

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2 Duties - roles and responsibilities

	Responsibilities
Chief Executive	The Chief Executive holds overall responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of this procedure within the UHB.
Executive Directors	<p>Executive Directors are accountable to the Chief Executive for the overall coordination and effective implementation of this procedure within their respective areas of control.</p> <p>This includes ensuring that appropriate systems, resources, and oversight are in place to support compliance with relevant health and safety legislation and internal UHB standards.</p>
Directorate / Locality Managers	Clinical/Service Board Directorates and Locality Managers share responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of this procedure within their respective Clinical or Service Boards. This includes overseeing compliance with relevant risk assessments, ensuring appropriate PPE provision, and supporting staff training and maintenance protocols.
Ward / Departmental Managers	<p>Overall responsibility for defined area to ensure all requirements of this procedure are maintained, kept up-to-date and remain effective.</p> <p>Ward/Departmental Managers are responsible for conducting adequate and suitable risk assessments and, where risks cannot be adequately controlled by other means, ensuring the provision of appropriate, compatible PPE/RPE to protect employees' health and safety. They should also monitor and supervise PPE/RPE usage to ensure correct and consistent application.</p>
All staff	<p>All individuals must comply with this procedure and all existing health and safety arrangements. They are required to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, as well as that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions at work.</p> <p>In relation to any duties or requirements placed on their employer or any other person under relevant health and safety legislation, individuals must co-operate as necessary to ensure those duties or requirements can be fulfilled.</p> <p>No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse, anything provided in the interest of health, safety, or welfare in accordance with statutory provisions.</p>

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<p>Procurement</p>	<p>The Procurement Team is responsible for supporting Clinical and Service Boards in achieving best value and enhancing service quality from contractors, service providers, and suppliers for non-property-related procurement. They will advise on compliant procurement routes for PPE and RPE.</p> <p>All contracts must clearly define the scope of services and include relevant Health and Safety protocols.</p> <p>Those procuring RPE/PPE within Clinical/Service Boards are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining technical specifications for new PPE/RPE based on needs identified through risk assessments. • Retrospectively assessing the technical suitability of existing PPE/RPE for the tasks they are used for. • Communicating these specifications to Procurement Services to ensure appropriate purchasing decisions.
<p>Health & Safety Team</p>	<p>Advisory Responsibilities – The relevant health and safety advisers will provide advice upon request, in line with their areas of expertise.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Department will offer guidance on risk assessments and the specification of RPE/PPE when requested.</p>
<p>Occupational Health Department</p>	<p>The Occupational Health Department will advise on any work-related ill health effects associated with PPE use. Where appropriate, they will report relevant concerns to the Health and Safety Team or the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team.</p>
<p>IPC Team</p>	<p>The IPC Team will provide expert advice on the application of infection prevention and control measures across all care settings.</p> <p>They will also support individual risk assessments by offering specialist guidance to ensure appropriate and effective control strategies are implemented.</p>

3 Definitions

Under the relevant regulations, PPE is defined as: *“All equipment (including clothing that provides protection against the weather) intended to be worn or held by a person at work, which protects them against one or more risks to their health or safety.”*

Examples include:

- Face masks
- Eye protection
- Aprons
- Gloves

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- Safety footwear
- Safety helmets
- High-visibility clothing

Special Considerations

- Hearing protection and RPE are generally governed by separate regulations.
- However, these items must be compatible with any other PPE provided to ensure comprehensive protection and avoid interference between equipment.

4 When to Use PPE

The UHB is committed to ensuring that all employees receive adequate health and safety training, information, and instruction regarding the correct use, maintenance, and limitations of PPE.

In the hierarchy of control measures, PPE should always be regarded as the 'last resort' to protect against risks to safety and health; engineering controls and safe systems of work should always be considered first.

Reasons for this approach:

1. PPE protects only the person wearing it, whereas measures controlling the risk at source can protect everyone at the workplace.
2. Theoretical maximum levels of protection are seldom achieved with PPE in practice, and the actual level of protection is difficult to assess. Effective protection is only achieved by suitable PPE, correctly fitted, maintained and properly used.

PPE may restrict the wearer to some extent by limiting mobility or visibility, or by requiring additional weight to be carried. Other means of protection should therefore be used whenever reasonably practicable.

PPE may also be used as an interim measure to protect employees whilst longer term permanent engineering solutions are being addressed.

5 Identification of PPE

Where a risk assessment has identified the need for PPE as a control measure for a work activity, line management must ensure that the correct type of effective PPE is chosen. The PPE must give the required level of protection against all the risks arising from the different hazards encountered within the working environment and by the activities to be undertaken.

Risk Assessments, whether overall or carried out under specific legislation, must identify the specification of PPE that will be suitable to protect against the risks presented.

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6 Selection of PPE

To ensure the correct type of PPE is selected, all workplace hazards must be carefully assessed. This enables the identification of PPE that is both appropriate for the hazard and suitable for the task.

When assessing PPE suitability, the following factors must be considered:

- **Risk Appropriateness**
Is the PPE suitable for the specific risks and environmental conditions where exposure may occur? *Example: Respirator filters designed for protection against particulates will not provide adequate protection against gases or vapours.*
- **Compliance with Standards**
Ensure the selected PPE/RPE meets relevant British and European standards and is CE marked or UKCA marked (mandatory from January 2022).
- **Risk Control Effectiveness**
Does the PPE effectively control the identified risks without introducing new hazards? *Example: Does it impair communication or visibility?*
- **Fit and Adjustability**
Can the PPE be properly adjusted to ensure a secure and comfortable fit for the wearer?
- **Wearer Health Considerations**
Has the physical health and any medical conditions of the wearer been considered in the selection process?
- **Task Demands**
Does the PPE suit the nature of the job, including:
 - Duration of wear
 - Physical effort required
 - Visibility and communication needs
- **Compatibility of Multiple Items**
If more than one item of PPE is required, are they compatible when worn together? *Example: Does a respirator interfere with the proper fit of eye protection?*

7 The hazards and types of PPE

Body Area	Hazard (examples)	PPE Options
Eyes	Chemical or metal splash, dust, flying particles, gas and vapour, radiation.	Safety spectacles, goggles, face shields, visors.
Head	Impact from falling or flying objects, head bumping, hair entanglement.	Helmets, bump caps, hair nets.
Hands and Arms	Abrasion, temperature extremes, cuts and punctures, impact, chemicals, electric shock, skin infection, burns, contamination.	Gloves, gauntlets, mitts, wrist cuffs, armllets.
Legs and Feet	Wet conditions, electrostatic build-up, slipping, cuts and punctures, falling objects, metal and chemical splash, abrasion.	Safety boots/shoes with protective toe caps and penetration-resistant midsoles, gaiters, leggings, spats.
Body	Extreme temperatures, adverse weather, chemical or metal splash, spray from pressure leaks or spray guns, impact or penetration, contaminated dust, clothing entanglement or wear.	Disposable or conventional overalls, boiler suits, specialist protective clothing (e.g. chain-mail aprons), high-visibility clothing.
Respiratory System	Dust, vapours, gases, oxygen-deficient environments.	Disposable filtering facepieces or respirators, half/full-face respirators, air-fed helmets, breathing apparatus.
Lone Working	Isolation, delayed emergency response.	Personal protective devices (lone worker devices), which are classified as PPE and must be used when issued.

8 Maintenance of PPE

Users and management **must** ensure that all PPE is clean, maintained, in good working order and in a good state of repair.

- Store equipment securely and appropriately when not in use. Keep items in a clean, dry cupboard; use protective cases for smaller items like eye protection.
- Maintain equipment cleanliness and functionality. Follow manufacturer instructions, including replacement and shelf-life guidelines.

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- Trained users may perform routine maintenance. Complex repairs must be handled by qualified professionals.

A suitable supply of replacement PPE must always be readily available.

Simple maintenance and repairs can be carried out by the trained wearer in accordance with the manufacturer's maintenance schedule.

More intricate repairs should be undertaken by personnel with the required skills and technical knowledge (i.e. contract services from the manufacturers or suppliers).

9 Training

All personnel required to use PPE must be informed of:

- The reasons for its use
- When and how it should be worn
- Procedures for maintenance, repair, and replacement
- Any limitations associated with the equipment

Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff receive appropriate training and instruction on the correct use of PPE. They must also monitor compliance to ensure PPE is being used effectively.

10 Respiratory Protective Equipment

Where there is a risk of respiratory exposure to substances e.g. through inhalation of chemicals or dusts, risk assessments shall ensure that measures are in place to reduce the risk of exposure. Examples of control measures include engineering controls such as local exhaust ventilation or damping down dusty areas prior to sweeping. Where risk assessments identify that there is a need for RPE, they shall identify the correct type to be used.

Advice should be sought from the local Health and Safety Advisor where needed, for instance if you are unsure whether RPE is required or if you are unsure what type of RPE should be used.

10.1 RPE Fit Testing

To ensure the wearer has the correct device, the initial selection of RPE should include fit testing. For RPE which has a tight-fitting face piece (filtering face pieces are usually known as disposable masks, half and full-face masks). There are two forms of fit-testing – **qualitative** and **quantitative**.

After the initial fit testing, it is important that re-testing should take place if the wearer's facial circumstances change e.g. through significant weight gain or loss or major dentistry work or facial injury. Re-testing should always take place if a different size or model of RPE is specified for either a different operation or if reassessment of the COSHH/risk assessment indicates higher specification.

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As a minimum, the fit testing of RPE should take place on three yearly basis and records kept of the results and of any changes made.

10.2 Use of RPE and Facial Hair

Tight fitting face pieces rely on a good seal between the wearer's face and the mask to allow air to be drawn through the filter. Beards or facial hair do not allow a good seal, and contaminated air may be drawn unfiltered as the wearer inhales. Even growth of facial hair for one day may interfere with the effectiveness of RPE.

Users should be clean-shaven for the fit test and always be clean-shaven when wearing a tight-fitting respirator i.e. You should shave within 8 hours of the start of your shift.

10.3 RPE User Checks and Maintenance

Reusable respirators must undergo regular checks and maintenance.

Users should perform a check before each use, and a recorded inspection must be carried out monthly, with records maintained locally.

If the respirator is used infrequently, it must be examined and tested prior to each use. In all cases, the interval between formal examinations and tests must not exceed three months.

10.4 RPE Pre Use Seal Check

A pre-use wearer seal check (respirator fit check) should be carried out each time a fit-tested facepiece is worn and before entering the hazardous environment.

This check is to determine whether the wearer has correctly donned a facepiece before entering a contaminated work area. The RPE manufacturer will provide instructions on how to carry it out. Note, however, that a pre-use wearer-seal check is not a substitute for fit testing.

11 Review

This Procedure shall be subject to review every 3 years or in light of significant change.

Any party who feels that an amendment to this procedure would be beneficial to increasing its effectiveness should contact the procedure author to request change.

12 Monitoring of the procedure

This procedure is implemented through the relevant Clinical and Service Boards. Health and safety arrangements are actively monitored via the Health and Safety meetings held by each Clinical/Service Board, as well as through the Operational Health and Safety Group meetings.

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13 References

Document Name
Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA)
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2022
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.
Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002
Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017
Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012
Noise at Work Regulations 2005
Construction (Head Protection) Regulations 1989