

Nuclear industry donates £200,000 of lifesaving PPE to the NHS

The company and its owner, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), have pledged £200,000 to purchase the kit for the county's frontline NHS and social care staff.

An estimated 5,000 gowns should be ready by the end of this week. A further 2,500 will be delivered each week over the next 6 weeks.

They will be distributed to NHS facilities across the county, according to need identified via the Local Resilience Forum.

Gowns provide crucial protection to care workers treating Covid-19 patients and help prevent the spread of infection.

They are in short supply as global stocks of PPE dwindle amid the global pandemic.

The donation is part of a targeted response by Sellafield Ltd, co-ordinated with local communities to ensure the areas of greatest need are identified and addressed.

On top of the 20,000 gowns, Sellafield Ltd and its supply chain have donated:

- 1,562 disposable suits
- 187 disposable gown/lab coats
- 4,850 disposable FFP3 masks
- 102 reusable masks
- 3,500 pairs of gloves
- 164 pairs of safety glasses
- 10 full face visors

Martin Chown, Sellafield Ltd Chief Executive, said:

From the outset, we've been committed to doing everything we can to support our local communities through this unprecedented challenge.

Like everyone, we're in awe of the courage, compassion, and commitment of our frontline NHS staff.

We all know how vital it is to ensure healthcare workers have access to the right protective equipment to safeguard themselves, their patients, and their families.

Gowns were identified as being in particular short supply. Our knowledge of the PPE supply chain meant we could quickly establish

a reliable route for high quality items via a national manufacturer and a local distributor.

I'd like to thank the NDA for its unwavering support which has allowed us to balance our contribution to the Covid-19 response with our nationally-important mission to keep the Sellafield site safe and secure.

Andrew van der Lem, the NDA's Head of Government Relations said:

Our skilled workforce across the NDA group has risen quickly to the sudden and ongoing challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic. From donating PPE, to actually making it from scratch, our scientists, engineers, safety teams, and other personnel have been helping.

Donations from across the NDA Group include 32,000 pairs of gloves, more than 5,000 full protective suits, and over 8,000 face masks/respirators. Together with colleagues from across our supply chain and local communities, everyone has been pulling together and showing true spirit and determination.

Assistant Chief Constable Andrew Slattery, Chairman of Cumbria's Local Resilience Forum, said:

This is a fantastic effort by Sellafield Ltd, which will provide a huge amount of support here in Cumbria for efforts to increase the supply of PPE.

It demonstrates how key agencies and employers are pulling together during this public health emergency to do their best for our communities and our brave NHS and social care staff.

Increasing the amount of PPE available will help keep frontline staff safe during the Covid-19 outbreak and help slow the spread of the virus.

Demand for Personal Protective Equipment will not subside any time soon and any other organisations or businesses which are able to help in the manufacture of this equipment is also invited to support the national effort.

They will be potentially saving lives.

Jo Lappin, Chair of the Cumbria's Business and Economic Response and Recovery Group (BERRG) said:

This is excellent news and I would like to congratulate Sellafield Ltd for their generosity in making sure that both our most vulnerable citizens and our most precious assets, our health and social care workers, are protected by having the right PPE available.

Sellafield Ltd and the NDA collectively have a very strong track record in supporting our communities and this is the latest example of that commitment. They have previously provided a significant contribution to BERRG's call for the donation of surplus PPE and this financial donation and their volunteering efforts further demonstrates this. We are all hugely appreciative of their efforts.

As well as PPE provision, Sellafield Ltd has provided support for local response groups and encouraged employees not identified as key workers to volunteer. More than 250 people are now volunteering in their local communities.

Martin added:

I'm enormously proud of all of our employees throughout this extraordinary period in our history.

Our key workers have shown incredible professionalism and commitment in carrying out critical tasks on site, supported by thousands of colleagues working from home.

Supporting our communities is one of our core values as a business and we'll continue to play our part until we overcome this historic challenge together.

Letter to Home Office (23 April 2020)

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

New measures to protect UK high street from aggressive rent collection and closure

- Government to introduce temporary new measures to safeguard the UK high street against aggressive debt recovery actions during the coronavirus pandemic
- statutory demands and winding up petitions issued to commercial tenants to be temporarily voided and changes to be made to the use of Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery, building on measures already introduced in the Coronavirus Act
- landlords and investors asked to work collaboratively with high street businesses unable to pay their bills during COVID-19 pandemic

High street shops and other companies under strain will be protected from aggressive rent collection and asked to pay what they can during the coronavirus pandemic, the Business Secretary has set out today (23 April 2020).

The majority of landlords and tenants are working well together to reach agreements on debt obligations, but some landlords have been putting tenants under undue pressure by using aggressive debt recovery tactics.

To stop these unfair practices, the government will temporarily ban the use of statutory demands (made between 1 March 2020 and 30 June 2020) and winding up petitions presented from Monday 27 April, through to 30 June, where a company cannot pay its bills due to coronavirus. This will help ensure these companies do not fall into deeper financial strain. The measures will be included in the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill, which the Business Secretary Alok Sharma set out earlier this month.

Government is also laying secondary legislation to provide tenants with more breathing space to pay rent by preventing landlords using Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery (CRAR) unless they are owed 90 days of unpaid rent.

This will further safeguard the high street and millions of jobs by helping to protect them from permanent closure during this time. However, while landlords are urged to give their tenants the breathing space needed, the government calls on tenants to pay rent where they can afford it or what they can in recognition of the strains felt by commercial landlords too.

Business Secretary, Alok Sharma, said:

In this exceptional time for the UK, it is vital that we ensure businesses are kept afloat so that they can continue to provide the jobs our economy needs beyond the coronavirus pandemic.

Our unprecedented package of support can help commercial landlords, including through the recent expansion of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme.

I know that like all businesses they are under pressure, but I would urge them to show forbearance to their tenants. I am also taking steps to ensure the minority of landlords using aggressive tactics to collect their rents can no longer do so while the COVID-19 emergency continues.

The temporary emergency measures are designed to acknowledge the pressures landlords are facing while encouraging cooperation in the spirit of fair commercial practice. They also come on top of a substantial package of business support measures, including a moratorium on evictions for commercial tenants for at least a 3-month period.

Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick, said:

During this period of significant disruption, we are doing everything we can to ensure that commercial tenants are as well placed as possible to get back to business from the pandemic.

We understand that landlords are facing their own very serious pressures and are concerned about their position with lenders. We are working with banks and investors to seek ways to address these issues and guide the whole sector through the pandemic.

Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium, Helen Dickinson OBE, said:

Rents are a huge burden for retailers that must be paid even where shops are closed. We have raised this problem with government and today's announcement protects firms who – during these extraordinary times – are unable to meet their rent obligations.

We thank Alok Sharma for his swift action, which will give retailers some vital relief and help safeguard millions of jobs all across the country. We look forward to the finer details, however it is clear government is listening and willing to act.

Chief Executive of UK Hospitality, Kate Nicholls, said:

This is a very helpful and pragmatic response from the Secretary of State and will give hospitality businesses some very valuable breathing room.

Many businesses in our sector have no revenue whatsoever coming in, so paying rents has been out of the question for some. This extra space will allow businesses to survive and to find a way to work

with landlords. If social distancing measures are to be in place for some time, as we now believe they will, this measure may need to be extended to ensure that businesses can survive.

These new emergency measures come on top of the government's support package for business and workers during the economic emergency:

- the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) where small and large employers will be eligible to apply for a government grant of 80% of workers' salaries up to £2,500 a month, backdated to March 1 and available for at least 3 months, with first grants to be paid within weeks
- a deferral of the next quarter of VAT payments for firms, until the end of June – representing a £30 billion injection into the economy
- £330 billion worth of government backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses
- a business rates holiday which is worth over £9.5 billion to business across the UK
- small business grants and grants for retail, hospitality and leisure

Under these measures, any winding-up petition that claims that the company is unable to pay its debts must first be reviewed by the court to determine why. The law will not permit petitions to be presented, or winding-up orders made, where the company's inability to pay is the result of COVID-19.

The new legislation to protect tenants will be in force until 30 June, and can be extended in line with the moratorium on commercial lease forfeiture.

Legislation will also be brought forward to prevent landlords using commercial rent arrears recovery (CRAR) unless 90 days or more of unpaid rent is owed.

The Financial Conduct Authority, the Financial Reporting Council and the Prudential Regulatory Authority have also issued a joint statement encouraging investors and lenders to take into account the issues arising directly from the COVID-19 pandemic in responding to potential breaches of covenants.

Emergency legislation already introduced by government includes a suspension of forfeiture rights, which prevents all commercial tenants from being removed from their properties until 30 June. The government has also announced [new insolvency measures](#) which will provide further support to businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

More information is available on the [government's support and guidance for businesses affected by coronavirus](#).

[Letter to the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Fire Services Management Committee](#)

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