

Who we worked with

The NHS, other public sector bodies and our own member institutions.

The Situation

The need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has increased exponentially around the world during the global Covid-19 pandemic. With such high demand, the market faced a number of challenges, from supply and logistics considerations to quality and pricing variations. The procurement of these items was an area where SUPC team members could add considerable value.

What happened

In March our STEMed Category Manager, Dani Sweeney, was seconded to join the effort to procure PPE items for the NHS. The scale of the exercise was such that the project was managed by the Ministry of Defence on behalf of the Cabinet Office. During the initial stages of the crisis, Dani led one of the teams who carried out supplier investigations to ensure products were available and met the specified requirements on the 20,000+ potential suppliers who signed up on the government portal. When PPE procurement moved to a longer-term strategic phase, she took on a more specialist role supporting the development of a strategy for procuring protective gloves.



Alongside this involvement in procuring PPE for the NHS, SUPC was also working to support our members with their needs in relation to this equipment. Many of them required supplies of PPE to carry out their activities, particularly when returning to face-to-face working. Our Assistant Category Manager Taron Smith conducted an aggregated RFQ exercise with relevant framework suppliers, having asked our members to provide details of their institutions' requirements. This collective approach led to five suppliers confirming appropriate pricing and lead

times. Individual institutions could then conduct their own specific call-offs directly.

The difference it made

The findings of Dani's team were used by the Cabinet Office to secure a supply for NHS frontline workers, both in the immediate crisis and for a longer-term strategy. Our aggregated RFQ saved time for our members and for the suppliers, who would otherwise have had multiple RFQs to respond to. Taron continues to monitor security of supply and pricing for our members.

'The higher education sector's response to the Covid crisis has been tremendous – from supplying frontline healthcare staff, to manufacturing PPE, and of course, creating the vaccine that will lead us out of lockdown. It was an honour to play my part, on behalf of SUPC, in the national effort and use my procurement skills for something so important – ultimately saving lives.'

DANI SWEENEY, SUPC CATEGORY MANAGER, STEMed

An Opportunity to Deploy Our Staff and Expertise to Benefit the Greater Good

For More Information

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