



Collaborative PPE: Impacts of recent Heatwave

Here's what the NFCC National Procurement Hub and MSA Bristol has to say...

It isn't news to any of us that over the course of July and August the UK has seen the hottest weather ever recorded.

Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) have been busy on an unprecedented scale 16 FRS's declaring Major Incidents

How has this impacted MSA Bristol?

It will come as no surprise that during the month of July, MSA Bristol saw a significant increase in service demand. Typically, they would receive around 400 calls per month but during the heatwave, 1035 calls were handled by their Customer Service Team.

This number was made up of 641 Off The Runs (OTR) calls from a monthly average of 250 (OTR calls), with a further 580 OTR calls in August. In some cases, we saw a 7-9 hr response time for a number of Fire and Rescue Authorities which far exceeded the 2hr contracted response to supplying emergency replacement PPE.

We can do better

MSA Bristol recognise that action must be taken to improve their response to ensure that our front-line service is able to continue during periods of national crisis. Working together with the National Procurement Hub, MSA Bristol shall ensure that lessons learned are factored into revised business continuity plans in order that they are much more prepared for similar events in the future.

Currently, MSA Bristol is experiencing a backlog within their laundry service and provision of pool stock PPE, which is expected to last until the end of September 2022. Best efforts are being made to try to reduce this lead-time, but this will depend on demand stabilising. Again, business continuity arrangements are being reviewed to take account of issues encountered with the laundry services provided during this period.

What is the supplier doing during this time?

Laundry

The hardest hit MSA Bristol Service Centre locations is the Eastern Service Centre based in Rainham. This provides laundry, repairs and servicing pool stock for 10 Fire and Rescue Services under the Collaborative PPE framework. In order to provide support, MSA Bristol's Western Service Centre based in Bristol has implemented additional washing capacity by adding night shifts as a temporary measure whilst the backlog is reduced. It is anticipated that the backlog of personal kit will be resolved by w/e 9th September 2022. The laundry of Operational Pool stock is estimated to return to normal by the end of September.

New Recruits and Training Pool Stock

Unfortunately, New Recruits and Pool Stock for Training Courses have also experienced issues which is as a result of a central distribution centre being opened up in Devizes to service International and Domestic orders for MSA Safety. The issues were not anticipated and has affected the ability for both the Eastern and Western Service Centres to person pack for these non-operational events. The National Procurement Hub has been assured that the teething issues are going to be resolved by w/c 12th September for new stock. MSA Bristol has implemented daily meetings with the Central Distribution Team in order to ensure that UK Customers are prioritised.

How can we help our Suppliers?

It is incumbent upon us all to work with our suppliers of PPE and laundry services in times of national crisis to ensure that they can focus on their primary services. Therefore, looking at our own Business Continuity plans and updating them following such events will be beneficial, with focus around alternative measures such as;

- during periods of degradation of service, arranging collections and deliveries from the suppliers to our own Services location which will enable the supplier to prioritise their resource capacity for OTR calls, or reallocate their resources to other priority areas of the service provision.
- minimise non-essential calls into the Customer Service Team;
- if there is available PPE on station that is personal issued to another wearer, look at using that PPE to maintain operational capability, as long as this is logged with the Supplier for alternative kit to be provided before the start of original wearers shift;
- increasing the allocation of PPE to wearers;
- ensuring that the decontamination process is followed, this supports the collection of PPE and enables the PPE to be processed quicker at the laundry point;
- in the most extreme temperatures review the need to undertake training courses;
- use of technology and additional resourcing to triage requests into helpdesks.

Looking ahead at Climate Change and PPE

The National Procurement Hub is supporting the Future Fire Fighter Project which has been commissioned by the NFCC PPE and Clothing Committee, with research being carried out by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory.

The research will look to identify the different roles and duties of the modern Fire Fighter over the next 10-20 years to develop an outcome that will future proof our wearers needs, including the impact of climate change.

Further information on the Future Fire Fighter Project can be found [here](#)

Thanks to you all for your continued support and patience during this unprecedented period.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the content of this update further, the National Procurement Hub will be happy to hear from you, so please do get in touch.

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