

Title of Motion: Inclusive personal protective equipment (PPE)

Proposer: Councillor Suzanne Hartwell Seconder: Councillor Nicky Hinchliff

Council notes that most Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is designed for men and fails to consider diverse end users. Inclusive PPE considers the user's Protected Characteristics (i.e. gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy, disability, and ethnic minorities)

Council further notes that finding PPE that fits can be an ongoing struggle for many females. Whilst legally companies and contractors must provide PPE, there is no rule about the PPE needing to fit correctly. Female-specific PPE, whilst good quality, can currently be 2-3 times the cost.

Council notes that British Standard BS EN ISO 20471 is the standard for high-visibility protective clothing. The ratio required for background material to fluorescent reflective material required on garments for certain vocations becomes impossible to produce. The legal requirement is that fluorescent strips:

“Must encircle the torso, sleeves, and trouser legs with at least 40% of fluorescent material present on the front of the garment. The reflective strips must be 50mm wide and the space between the 2 reflective strips must be at least 50 mm.”

Council notes with concern that wearers may be left with no choice but to wear PPE which is compliant but too big or non-compliant but fits and incurring additional costs to make alterations. This causes additional safety concerns to females for just doing their job.

Council further notes and recognises widespread inequalities in the provision of PPE across minority groups in STEM industries, noting that many women face a range of health and safety effects caused by ill-fitting PPE, with a significant percentage not receiving women's specific PPE from their employers (59.6%).

Council therefore calls on the Leader and Cabinet to -

1. Take steps to ensure Inclusive PPE is available as required in all areas of the Council business;
2. Encourages local businesses to provide inclusive PPE; and
3. Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care setting out the terms of this motion and calling on Government to add the requirement for inclusive PPE Regulations 1992, to the guidance on all forms of PPE.

Please return to Mike_Jones1@sandwell.gov.uk and democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk by 12 noon on the 8th full day **before** the scheduled meeting of Full Council.