

# Position Statement of the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) in Patients with COVID-19 Disease

The COVID-19 Epidemic in the United Kingdom has put considerable strain on the National Health Service. The number of very sick people of all ages has increase over a short period of weeks. Many of these people will be in intensive care or high dependency units where the risk of Cardiac Arrest is high. However Cardiac Arrests may occur outside these areas.

The safety of NHS staff looking after these patients must be the highest priority. Proper and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is vital to give patients the best care but giving maximum safety to Health Care Staff.

Public Health England, Public Health Wales, Health Protection Scotland and the Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland) have issued advice on Personal Protective Equipment (link 1). Aerosol Generated Procedures (AGP) require the highest level of protection (Level Three PPE) including a respirator and visor.

At present these bodies have not included Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and in particular cardiac compression as an AGP (link 2).

The Resuscitation Council (United Kingdom) issues national advice on resuscitation. It has issued advice on Covid-19, CPR and Resuscitation. In its statement on 20 April (link 3) the Council disagrees with the Public Health England view that chest compressions should not be a designated AGP.

**“The clinical reality is that chest compressions produce excretions from a patient’s nose and mouth. As such, irrespective of whether this is via aerosol or droplet or both, this poses a demonstrable risk to Health Care Professionals (HCPs). Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) COVID-19 guidance recognises this risk and designates that Level 3 PPE should be donned before chest compressions are undertaken by HCPs. We also advise that a defibrillator be employed at the earliest opportunity. This buys crucial time for patients and HCPs alike and provides the most appropriate balance of HCP safety and care for patients. ”**

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow fully agrees and supports the RC(UK) recommendations in the best interests of Health Care Professionals and patients.

## References

1 General infection Prevention and Control

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>

2 Ref re PPE with CPR excluded

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

3 RCUK Statement

<https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/statement-on-phe-ppe-guidance/>

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