

Innovation and sustainability hub – update on literature reviews for the National IPC Manual for England

16 June 2026

**Catherine Boswell – senior healthcare scientist
National IPC Team, NHS England**



Background

The National Infection Prevention and Control Manual (NIPCM) is:

- a ‘once for England’ policy document that applies to all settings where NHS care is delivered. It can also be used in other care settings (for example, care homes) where it should be considered best practice.
- evidence based and has a defined methodology for reviewing evidence and developing recommendations.
- a ‘living’ document informed by stakeholders and reactive to emerging evidence.



Background cont.

The NIPCM aims to:

- Make it easy for health and care staff to apply effective infection prevention and control (IPC) precautions.
- Reduce variation and optimise infection prevention and control practices throughout England.
- Help reduce the risk of healthcare associated infection (HCAI).
- Help align practice, monitoring, quality improvement and scrutiny.



Respiratory Protective Equipment

Systematic literature review

- Review will inform recommendations in section 2.4 of the NIPCM for England
- Question set incorporates lessons learned/ issues arising from COVID-19 pandemic as well as the sustainability agenda specifically:
- The types of RPE suitable for use in healthcare including reusable, disposable, valved/non-valved etc.
- Decontamination of reusable RPE.

RPE

Question set

1. Are there any legislative requirements relating to the use of RPE by healthcare workers?
2. When/where should RPE be worn:
 - a) When applying standard infection control precautions (SICPs)?
 - b) When applying transmission-based precautions (TBPs)?
3. What type(s) of RPE should be worn:
 - a) When applying standard infection control precautions (SICPs)?
 - b) When applying transmission-based precautions (TBPs)?
4. What standards (BS/EN) must FFP respirators adhere to and what design features are desirable?
5. What are the requirements for fit-testing RPE in the UK?
6. When should HCWs be fit-tested?
7. What is a 'fit check' and how is a fit check carried out?
8. What is the correct technique for putting on (donning) an FFP respirator?
9. What is the correct technique for removing (doffing) an FFP respirator?
10. When should an FFP respirator be changed or removed?
11. When should an infectious patient wear a respirator?
12. When should a visitor wear a respirator?
13. How should a respirator be decontaminated (if reusable)?
14. How and where should RPE be stored to prevent contamination and to ensure availability at the point of use?
15. Are there any known risks associated with RPE use in relation to transmission of infection?
16. Are there any known risks associated with RPE use in relation to occupational health?



Respiratory Protective Equipment

Systematic literature review

- Two-person systematic literature review using NIPCM defined methodology and in accordance with Cochrane and PRISMA.
- Commenced in July 2025.
- Searches identified 32,201 articles, 21,701 articles for title and abstract screening after deduplication.
- 312 articles were identified for full text screening.
- Around 180 articles identified as eligible for inclusion, approximately half (90) relevant to decontamination.
- First draft expected Aug/Sep 2026, wider stakeholder engagement anticipated in Oct/Nov 2026.



Rapid review/SBAR on reusable containers

- Decision to carry out review based on stakeholder enquiries/feedback
- Short, focussed review of evidence on the use of reusable/refillable bottles or containers for cleaning products/disinfectants and hand hygiene products
- Objective is to determine whether and how reusables containers could be used safely in healthcare environments with a focus on identified risks and mitigations.
- Review questions and recommendations will be informed by a SLWG/review group in addition to standing NIPCM governance groups and wider stakeholder engagement.
- Currently scheduled for delivery in March 2027.



NIPCM addendum on sustainable IPC practice

- NHS England NIPCT are working with colleagues to support an IPC sustainability statement. This is being led by the sustainability lead within NHSE quality team in collaboration with greened NHS and DHSC design for life teams
- In conjunction, NHSE NIPCM are developing a sustainability addendum to the NIPCM to emphasise the need for sustainable IPC practice and support local decision making.
- Work currently being scoped, Delivery planned for Q3 2026/27.
- Information on how to get involved in our stakeholder engagement exercises including shaping this addendum will be communicated to the hub in Summer 2026.

Thank You



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