

■ PPE Tender Commentary (Paul Chivers)

Paul then highlighted concerns about the forthcoming £917m NHS Supply Chain PPE tender, noting its strong emphasis on single-use products despite NHS Net Zero commitments. He argued for greater inclusion of reusable, sustainable alternatives and clearer alignment with innovation and carbon-reduction goals.

Overview of the Tender

- NHS Supply Chain tender valued at **£917m**, covering:
 - Type IIR masks
 - FFP3 respirators
 - Gowns
 - Eye protection
 - Visors
 - PAPRs and consumables
 - Fit-testing services
- Intended to support routine supply and **pandemic stockpiling**.

Key Concerns

- Tender repeatedly specifies “**single-use**” PPE, contradicting:
 - **NHS Net Zero commitments**
 - Evidence supporting reusable, sustainable alternatives
- Risks locking the NHS into **long-term single-use procurement** until 2030–31.
- Pandemic stockpiling of single-use PPE risks repeating past waste and obsolescence.

Issues with Single-Use PPE

- Type IIR masks: 745 million used annually; 1.4 billion during COVID.
- FFP3 respirators: 11–13 million discarded annually.
- Visors widely disliked due to:
 - Distortion of vision
 - Discomfort
 - Interference with clinical tasks (e.g., maternity, cannulation)

- PAPRs:
 - Risk of poor maintenance if owned rather than leased.
 - Cleaning and disinfection challenges can render “reusable” hoods effectively **single-use** (£60 per hood).

Sustainability vs Tender Requirements

- Tender claims to seek:
 - Sustainability
 - Carbon reduction
 - Labour-standards compliance
 - Innovation
- Yet the product list is almost entirely **single-use**, limiting genuine innovation.

Potential Pause in Tender

- Tender was due to launch 9 June but has gone quiet.
- Paul notes he raised concerns with DHSC leadership; unclear whether this influenced the delay.

Call to Action

- Trusts spending £3.4–8bn outside NHS Supply Chain could adopt reusable PPE now.
- The **Green Healthcare Consultancy** can support:
 - Product validation
 - Compliance checks
 - Decontamination pathways
 - Adoption planning