



OnSite Support Research Team

Guide to the Provision of Inclusive Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and BS30417

First published November 2025

**THE UK
INDUSTRY IS
FACING A
CHALLENGE THAT
HAS NOTHING TO
DO WITH PAY
RATES OR
PROJECT
TIMELINES.**

**IT'S ABOUT AN
AGING
WORKING,
POPULATION
AND A LACK OF
ATTRACTION AND
RETENSION OF
SKILLED PEOPLE
IN THE SECTOR
THAT AN
OVERRELIANCE
ON TRANSIENT
LABOUR ALONE
CANNOT FIX.**

Introduction

In September 2025, BSI released a new standard that addresses this issue head-on. BS 30417: The Provision of Inclusive Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Guide provides practical guidance for ensuring every worker, regardless of gender, ethnicity, body shape, age, or disability, has access to PPE that actually fits.

Until now the standards for PPE were seen as a way of control risks (a last line of defence to protect workers) and hence often treated simply as a disposable necessity. The introduction of the new standard reflects changes in more enlightened employer and employee attitudes.

Many employers have discovered that with the overall changing attitudes to work and tools that can help attract, retain the working population are increasingly important and PPE should be treated as an asset that can also be used to enhance the productivity, confidence and sense of pride of the people using it.

Viewing and treating PPE differently as a means it can also be used to help create a healthier work environment, increased employees' sense of wellbeing confidence and self-worth and improve productivity.

For the organisations it also enhances a company's reputation and can lead to lower insurance premiums and reduced legal risks. Getting it right doesn't need to come at a cost because by managing it differently organisations can actually better reduce cost, risk and environmental impact whilst increasing compliance, health, safety, wellbeing, staff retention and reputation.

Background

The Importance of PPE cannot and should not be underestimated for a variety of reasons. But because of its significance in health and safety terms it also takes up a disproportionate amount of time in ensuring compliance, safety, wellbeing performance and cost.

The approach doesn't have to be restricted to just PPE and of course include all forms of performance workwear.

Legal Requirements - Choosing the Right PPE

Legislation

The overriding legislation is The Personal Protective Equipment at Work (Amendment) Regulations 2022.

For each type of equipment there are a number of specific standards that apply understandably too many to comprehensively list here given the number of PPE categories. See reference to Standards below

It should also be remembered that Regulation (EU) 2016/425 (as incorporated into UK law) sets out the essential health and safety requirements for PPE in the UK.

Employees too have a responsibility to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the correct way, as instructed by the employer.

Local Regulation

The requirements also need to be set in context of an individual Project's Minimum Standards. These may be set at a project level both by the Client and / or Contractor.

These specific requirements may exceed the minimum regulatory requirements, particularly for task / job specific activities based on the profile and assessment of the risk or for the enhanced standards set for the increased wellbeing and protection of the individuals on the project.

This may well include specific industry requirements including those for the Highways and Rail sectors, amongst others, that will take precedence over any contractors' standards.

With reference to the earlier observation regarding local regulation for specific sectors please see links to

[PPE for Rail Operatives](#)

[PPE for Road Operatives](#)

Standards

There are also the specific performance requirements that an item of PPE must comply to

To see a guide of the more pertinent standards please refer to the accompanying document to this series of White Papers:

[PPE Standards Summary Guide](#).

46% OF BRITISH WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED PPE OR UNIFORM HAVE RECEIVED SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T FIT.

WHEN WE LOOK AT THE BROADER PICTURE, 36% OF UK WOMEN HAVE BEEN SUPPLIED INAPPROPRIATE PPE.

New Standard

BS 30417 specifically highlighted construction as one of the sectors where ill-fitting PPE is causing problems. Traditionally, PPE has been designed around the "average man," failing to meet the needs of today's diverse workforce. The consequences extend beyond discomfort.

According to the BSI announcement, ill-fitting PPE can:

- Pose serious safety risks
- Threaten long-term health
- Drive skilled professionals out of sectors already struggling with labour shortages



The standard acknowledges that PPE designed without consideration for gender, ethnicity, body shape, age, or disability causes discomfort, leads to compromised safety, increases injury risk, lowers job satisfaction, and drives skilled workers away.

"THE PROVISION OF INCLUSIVE PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT ISN'T JUST A MATTER OF COMPLIANCE, IT'S A MATTER OF RESPECT, DIGNITY, AND SAFETY FOR EVERY INDIVIDUAL IN THE WORKFORCE. ULTIMATELY, IT IS ABOUT ENSURING WORKERS ARE EQUIPPED TO GET ON WITH THEIR JOBS, IN ROLES WHERE THEIR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE ARE OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE."

**ANNE HAYES
BSI DIRECTOR OF
SECTORS AND
STANDARDS
DEVELOPMENT**

What the BS 30417 standard provides:

The standard offers practical, evidence-based guidance for organizations. According to BSI, it is designed to:

- **Reduce workplace risks and improve compliance** by providing PPE that truly fits all employees
- **Promote enhanced performance and productivity** through better fitting, more comfortable equipment
- **Boost recruitment and retention** by addressing a key factor in workforce well-being and job satisfaction
- **Support legislative and safety obligations** with clear, actionable recommendations
- **Encourage innovation and industry leadership** in PPE provision

How to find out more?

One of the most significant aspects of BS 30417 is that BSI has made it freely available to support accessibility. This removes a key barrier to implementation and demonstrates the importance placed on addressing this issue across all sectors. So those in the sector can take action now:

1. **Download the Standard:**
BS 30417 is freely available from BSI.
The first step is reviewing the guidance to understand what inclusive PPE provision means in practice for your organisation.
2. **Assess Your Current Provision**
Evaluate whether your current PPE offerings meet the needs of your diverse workforce across gender, ethnicity, body shape, age, and disability.
3. **Work with Your PPE Supplier**
As a PPE supplier committed to BS 30417 principles, your partner can help you understand the standard's requirements and source appropriate PPE that meets diverse workforce needs.
4. **Engage Your Workforce**
With Drop in Sessions, Toolbox Talks and Fitting Sessions.
5. **Get feedback.**
The workers wearing PPE daily have valuable insights into fit and functionality issues. Their input is essential for effective implementation.
6. **Looking Ahead**
BSI has announced a series of industry-supported webinars on inclusive PPE scheduled for 2026, providing ongoing support for companies implementing the standard.

Supporting Implementation:

Your PPE supplier should have the knowledge, capability and collateral to support you as a client to implement BS 30417.

- Understand the standard's requirements and how they apply to your operations
- Source PPE that meets the needs of your diverse workforce
- Develop appropriate sizing ranges across all PPE categories
- Create processes for proper fitting and ongoing feedback
- Provide fitting sessions
- Deliver Tool Box Talks
- Work with manufacturers on further developments to an already comprehensive 7 point range of solutions from head to foot

**PLAN FOR
SUCCESS RIGHT
FROM THE START**

**ENHANCE AN
ORGANISATION'S
REPUTATION
AND
ATTRACTIVENESS
AS AN EMPLOYER**

Conclusion

The diverse PPE the industry needs exists. The narrative has therefore changed from one of a lack of solutions to one of attitude and education.

The challenge is now about accessing and promoting what is already widely available and including this into an organisation's minimum standards.

The manufacturers and suppliers are amongst many welcoming the new BS standard as it

- 1 draws further attention to the labour demands of the sector
- 2 challenges thinking around better assessment and accessibility
- 3 introduces a new dimension to compliance
- 4 cements the supply side of the sector efforts over the last decade in promoting the solutions that they have worked hard on to address the obvious need

For companies struggling with diverse recruitment and retention of skilled staff, this freely available standard offers a clear path forward.

Acknowledgements

Download BS 30417 for free at:

www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/insights-and-media/insights/brochures/bs-30417-provision-of-inclusive-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-guide

For more information and to register for upcoming webinars, visit the BSI website