

University of Bath Press Release

8 April 2020

University of Bath engineers have now made over 5,500 face shields for hospital staff

Bath engineers' PPE donations continue, eye protectors now also being made for GPs

- Over 5,500 face shields donated to NHS staff at Royal United Hospitals Bath
- University teams have also delivered 700 eye protectors to GP practices
- Bath engineers thank businesses and locals who have given and offered help, and call for more acetate, foam and elastic supplies

University of Bath engineers have thanked businesses and local people for helping their effort to donate protective face shields to staff at the Royal United Hospitals Bath (RUH).

A team from across the University and based within the Faculty of Engineering & Design have now handed over more than 5,000 face shields, having set up a production line on campus.

James Scott, Chief Executive of the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Everyone at the RUH is incredibly grateful for the support we have received from the University of Bath.

"The thousands of face shields that have been donated free of charge to the hospital will help to keep our key frontline staff safe while we tackle one of the biggest challenges the hospital has ever faced."

The effort to help protect RUH staff from COVID-19 during their work follows an initial donation of 500 face shields at the end of last month. Since then, the work has continued and grown to maximise the scale of donations to departments around the hospitals. Staff have already made as many as 1,500 shields in one day, and are set to produce even more as supplies arrive.

Eye protection for GPs also being made

The team is now also using acetate left over from the face shields to produce eye protectors for GPs - 700 sets of which have now been sent to practices around Bath.

The eye protector frames have so far been made on campus using a combination of techniques including 3D printing, laser cutting and metal forming, however Herman Miller, which normally produces office furniture from its Melksham factory, is set to donate 600 3D-printed frames in the coming days.

A second version of the frames, made from laser-cut MDF, will be produced on-site at the University, while local residents with 3D printers have also volunteered the use of their machines.

Professor Richie Gill, who has been working on the University's collaboration with the RUH and local businesses, said: "We are hugely grateful for everyone's efforts in this project, both from University staff, staff at the RUH and GPs who have helped to validate the designs, donors who have made significant contributions and from companies that have offered their help and resources.

"The equipment we're making at the moment is relatively simple, but absolutely vital. The real test for us is making as much as we can, so taking a multi-pronged approach to maximise the amount we can hand over is key."

Donations of money and materials received

The team has been inundated with offers of help, both for supplies and cash donations to help them buy further stock. The University's Imaging, Design and Print Services team has donated acetate sheeting, as have several local individuals, while foam blocks and elastic ribbon have been sent by local firms.

The University has received two significant donations totalling £35,000, including a gift from the William Chown Charitable Trust, to enable the team to purchase supplies.

Any businesses or individuals who could donate or supply materials including acetate sheets, foam blocks or elasticated ribbon to the team have been asked to email medicalfaceshields@gmail.com.

Other members of the team working to help the RUH are investigating whether a single ventilator could be made to safely supply two patients with air, and how simple oxygen sensors could be produced to help this.

A set of perspex covers, made for hospital ward equipment trolleys and designed to reduce the time needed to clean them between patients, have already been delivered and are in use.

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Notes

For further information contact Will McManus in the University of Bath press office on +44 (0)1225 385798, wem25@bath.ac.uk or press@bath.ac.uk.

University of Bath

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