

BSI launches new standard to address critical gaps in PPE fit

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Practical guidance designed to ensure employers across all sectors provide staff with personal protective equipment (PPE) that fits, regardless of gender, ethnicity, body shape, age, or disability, has been issued in a long-awaited move designed to help struggling sectors retained skilled workers and ultimately enhance people's safety at work.

[The Provision of Inclusive Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) - Guide \(BS 30417\)](#), freely available to support accessibility, aims to address the longstanding issue of ill-fitting PPE. Traditionally designed around the 'average man,' PPE often falls short in meeting the needs of today's diverse workforce.

Published by [BSI](#) in its capacity as the UK national standards body, its release comes as new research shows that 46% of British women who have been supplied PPE or uniform have been supplied something that doesn't fit^[1]. In industries ranging from construction and healthcare to policing, poor fit isn't just an inconvenience, it can pose serious safety risks, threaten long-term health, or drive skilled professionals out of sectors already struggling with labour shortage.

PPE designed without consideration for gender, ethnicity, body shape, age, or disability not only causes discomfort but leads to compromised safety, increased injury risk, lower job satisfaction, and even drives skilled workers away. According to a recent study by Focal Data, 36% of UK women and 45% of women globally have been supplied inappropriate PPE. In one example, earlier this month [reports](#) highlighted police officers in Scotland resorting to buying their own uniforms due to poor quality and ill-fitting kit, or managing via non-standard workarounds.

The standard offers practical, evidence-based guidance for organisations to reduce workplace risks and

improve compliance by providing PPE that truly fits all employees. It is designed to promote enhanced performance and productivity through better fitting, more comfortable equipment, while also helping organisations boost recruitment and retention by addressing a key factor in workforce well-being and job satisfaction. It supports legislative and safety obligations with clear, actionable recommendations, and encourages innovation and industry leadership in PPE provision.

Anne Hayes, Director of Sectors and Standards Development, BSI said: "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. By providing PPE for everyone, we help build safer, more productive workplaces and stop skilled workers from leaving because they feel they don't belong."

Kirsteen Sullivan MP, Member of Parliament for Bathgate and Linlithgow, said: "Since first meeting with local PPE manufacturers in November 2024, I have been shocked by the scale of poor fit PPE and companies relying on non-regulation products. The BSI has built a coalition which reflects manufacturers, experts, workers' experience, and employers to deliver this new standard for British industry, and I am immensely proud to stand alongside them as they prepare to launch the standard. This is the perfect opportunity to match Britain's project to re-industrialise with the PPE needs of the expanding and diverse workforce."

Katy Robinson, Founder of The PPE Campaign & Senior Project Manager at East Riding of Yorkshire Council, said: "The launch of BS 30417 for the Provision of Inclusive PPE is a pivotal step for the campaigns that have been echoing across the construction industry over the last few years to bring about emphasis on the correct fit of PPE. In an industry where we have increasing diversity, it is vital that we work to ensure that everyone can work safely and comfortably, no matter their gender, ethnicity, religion, or disability."

Natalie Wilson, BS 30417 Chair, Founder & Managing Director Workwear Solutions International Ltd, said: "The positive impact this Standard will have for users of PPE starts with equity of access to correctly fitting PPE across diverse workforces, and leads to attracting and retaining talent, supporting people to return to work following long-term absences, and ultimately allowing more people to be able to operate safely across all industries. I am incredibly proud of the work undertaken from concept to launch of the Standard, and I'm excited to see its practical implementation over the coming months."

Dr Debbie Janson, Associate Professor - People-Led, University of Bath, said: "The introduction of BS 30417 is a landmark moment; it provides practical, evidence-based guidance for making PPE inclusive by design, provision and use. It supports my goal of driving change in industries where "making do" has too often been the norm for those who don't fit traditional standards. In a time when many sectors are facing serious skills shortages, the provision of properly designed PPE is a simple but powerful way to show that all workers are respected and supported."

Rowshi Hussain, Senior Geo-Environmental Engineer, Curtins, said "Being a part of the BS 30417 Provision of Inclusive PPE Guidance committee was extremely important to me given I represented a minority voice within the industry. The British Standard and committee have really empowered me to drive for change within the construction industry by creating a safe space to voice my opinions, challenge my own unconscious bias and open my eyes to the challenges of what 'Inclusive' PPE means for myself and for others beyond my own industry."

BSI encourages organizations to download the freely available BS 30417 standard and join the upcoming series of industry-supported webinars on the topic of inclusive PPE, which are scheduled for 2026. You can find further information, [here](#).

[1] Research was conducted by FocalData for BSI between 24 July and 6 August, and covers the views of over 1,000 working women in the UK