

**Updated RCUK Statement on PHE PPE Guidance by Professor Jonathan Wyllie, RCUK President:  
20 April 2020**

“We are deeply concerned by Public Health England (PHE)’s continued insistence on designating chest compressions as non Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs). The clinical reality is that chest compressions produce excretions from a patient’s nose and mouth. As such, irrespective of whether this is via aerosol or droplet or both, this poses a demonstrable risk to Health Care Professionals (HCPs). Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) COVID-19 guidance recognises this risk and designates that Level 3 PPE should be donned before chest compressions are undertaken by HCPs. We also advise that a defibrillator be employed at the earliest opportunity. This buys crucial time for patients and HCPs alike and provides the most appropriate balance of HCP safety and care for patients.

RCUK guidance is based upon WHO and International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) guidance and the emerging evidence available to us through the world experts in resuscitation who make up our membership. Our guidance is also being used by clinicians around the world.

We have sought to engage with PHE on the scientific complexities and clinical realities of this issue over the last few weeks. We have also shared with them the latest evidence which serves to reinforce the need to provide Level 3 PPE to HCPs in this situation. It is regrettable that this has not persuaded them to alter their policy on this issue.

In the meantime, significant confusion exists across the NHS, with many Trusts and HCPs choosing to follow RCUK Guidance, in opposition to that of PHE. RCUK’s position has been clear and consistent throughout this crisis. Our guidance is based on scientific evidence and a wealth of clinical experience across the resuscitation world. Our concern remains that not providing Level 3 PPE to HCPs performing chest compressions is a clear risk to their safety. In a pandemic where HCPs are tragically dying, we challenge the rationale for advocating a lesser form of PPE where expert consensus states that such a risk to safety exists. Irrespective of their stance on the AGP issue, we ask PHE to recommend Level 3 PPE for chest compressions to ensure safety for the healthcare workforce.”

Notes to editors:

1. RCUK guidance: <https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/>
2. Supporting Evidence:
  - a. International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR): <https://www.ilcor.org/covid-19>
  - b. World Health Organisation (WHO): [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331695/WHO-2019-nCov-IPC\\_PPE\\_use-2020.3-eng.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331695/WHO-2019-nCov-IPC_PPE_use-2020.3-eng.pdf)
  - c. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-faq.html>
  - d. Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society (ANZICS): [https://www.anzics.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ANZI\\_3367\\_Guidelines\\_V2.pdf](https://www.anzics.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ANZI_3367_Guidelines_V2.pdf)
  - e. DoD COVID-19 Practice Management Guide - Health.milhealth.mil › Reference-Center › Technical-Documents › 2020/03/24 2
  - f. Resuscitation Journal: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resuscitation.2020.04.022> (Added 22.04.20)
3. CPR advice for a home setting: <https://youtu.be/f4Zl1PAsmks>