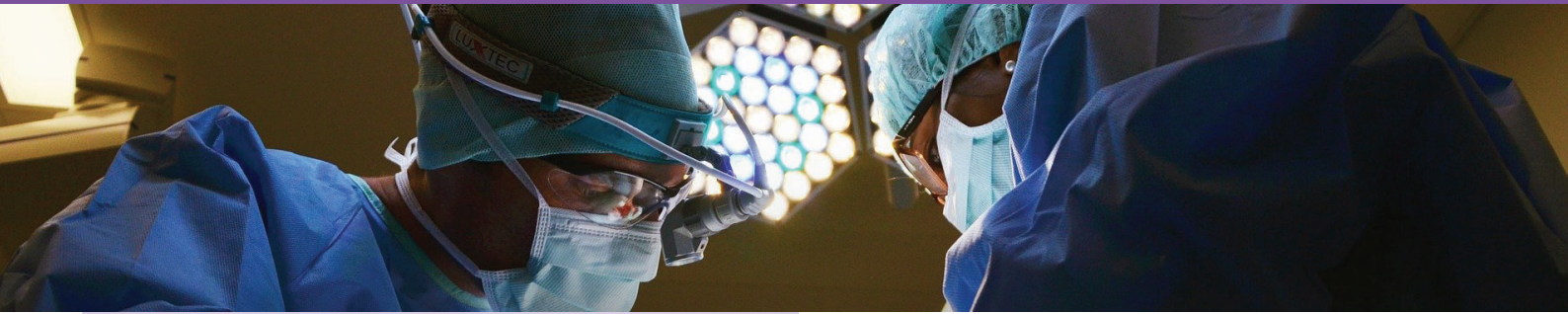


# MIDLANDS ENGINE HEALTH

## Focus on MedTech - Midlands Engine PPE Event Series & The Midlands PPE Collective

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Midlands Engine Health and its partners have been driving regional activity that focuses upon personal protective equipment through two key activities: The Midlands Engine PPE event series and The Midlands PPE Collective.

### ***The Midlands Engine PPE event series***

The Midlands Engine PPE event series was instigated following a relative collapse of the PPE supply chain (in particular for non-NHS product use) in the Midlands during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. In response, a series of exploratory meetings was planned to examine issues and learn from disruptive and other innovative responses, ensure preparedness in the event of a second or subsequent waves, identify if steps were needed to enable greater resilience in regional supply chains - and gather formative feedback from regionally based firms to help shape next steps.

Following these initial meetings, the Midlands Engine, in conjunction with Midlands Innovation Health and Midlands Health Alliance, hosted a virtual discussion series on 'Enabling the Midlands PPE Supply Chain'. Each meeting focused on a different aspect of the PPE supply chain and was attended by the relevant representatives from across local authorities, businesses and universities. As a result of these meetings, a set of critical actions was set out (including writing to the Health Secretary regarding PPE procurement decisions) and ambitions agreed upon.

These ambitions set out the desire for Midlands Engine partners: to create an internationally leading cluster of excellence for regulatory science; to develop the UK's primary centre for the design, development and manufacture of environmentally sustainable PPE and its materials; and to reframe national PPE procurement objectives to enable domestic PPE supply security and lever regional capabilities in this field.



### ***The Midlands PPE Collective***

The West Midlands Health Technologies Cluster Ltd and Medilink Midlands aimed to turn the disappointment experienced by manufacturing businesses (including Airguard Filters, Hospital Direct (Marketing), Arrow Medical and Wearwell, among others) when the procurement rules changed to prevent NHS Trusts procuring any PPE locally, into a positive for the health technologies sector in the Midlands. The result was the formation of The Midlands PPE Collective which submitted four proposals to Government for consideration.

The first proposal suggested that the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) work with the Midlands PPE Collective to bring about a health technologies innovation partnership to maximise the opportunities for economic growth in the near term. The Collective's second proposal argued that, with the involvement of BEIS, the Midlands PPE Collective could work together to improve the Government's stated aims for resilient and sustainable procurement, thus reducing reliance on overseas supply chains. The Collective also offered the possibility of piloting specific measures to promote this aim. The third proposal requested that the NHS Supply Chain be asked to make the Midlands PPE Collective an approved supplier so that it would have the opportunity to sell products and services to NHS organisations within and beyond the West Midlands. Finally, the fourth proposal suggested that as the economy starts to re-open and the need for mass testing for large-scale events and workplaces grows, that the extra PPE required can be sourced responsibly, giving a fair opportunity to sourcing locally.