



Keela Supplies COVID-19 PPE to NHS Scotland

From first registering with SDP Scotland in 2011, Keela has gone from strength to strength in winning public sector work. Amid supply issues of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, with global demand for gloves and masks at unprecedented levels, a deal was agreed to manufacture more PPE for NHS Scotland in May 2020.

Based in Fife, Keela employs 100 staff and is a leading technical outdoor brand and manufacturer of protective clothing and accessories for blue light emergency services around the world.



Soon after requirements for public sector procurement in Scotland changed in 2008, Keela registered with the Supplier Development Programme and began attending tender training events. Keela and Ilasco Ltd (Keela's factory shop) have since successfully tendered for millions of pounds of public sector contracts. In May 2020, the Scottish Government announced an agreement that would provide more than half of NHS Scotland's weekly requirement for non-sterile gowns, which would be partially manufactured by Keela in Glenrothes. The directly awarded contract was approved for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by the contracting authority in line with Regulation 33(1)(c) of the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015.

Keela and another supplier initially ramped production to an output of 20,000 gowns per week to provide NHS Scotland with a steady supply of 40,000 gowns per week. The non-sterile PPE gowns were manufactured in line with published guidance and testing standards and completions were ratified by Health Protection Scotland.

Sam Fernando, Sales Director for Keela, said: "The Supplier Development Programme supplied the building blocks to successful public sector tendering practices for Keela. The trainers gave very clear guidance on what was required, what the public sector were looking for and allowed us to ask questions. I attended the first introductory tender writing courses up to the more experienced levels with SDP, and as new people have come into the business as we expanded, it remains an invaluable part of the first stage of training to support the longevity of supplying to the public sector."

She continued: "During the COVID-19 crisis, the fact that we had consistently delivered high quality goods to fulfil our previously won public sector contracts was, in my view, key to being asked to help supply vital protective gowns in Scotland. SDP Scotland helped us form that foundation with regard to quality tendering."

Scottish Government Trade Minister Ivan McKee said: "This new supply chain means significant volumes of the PPE gowns used in Scotland can be manufactured in Scotland – thereby helping to protect us from any global supply issues and ensure frontline staff continue to have the protection they need. It also demonstrates what can be achieved when the public and private sectors collaborate to tackle the many challenges caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic."