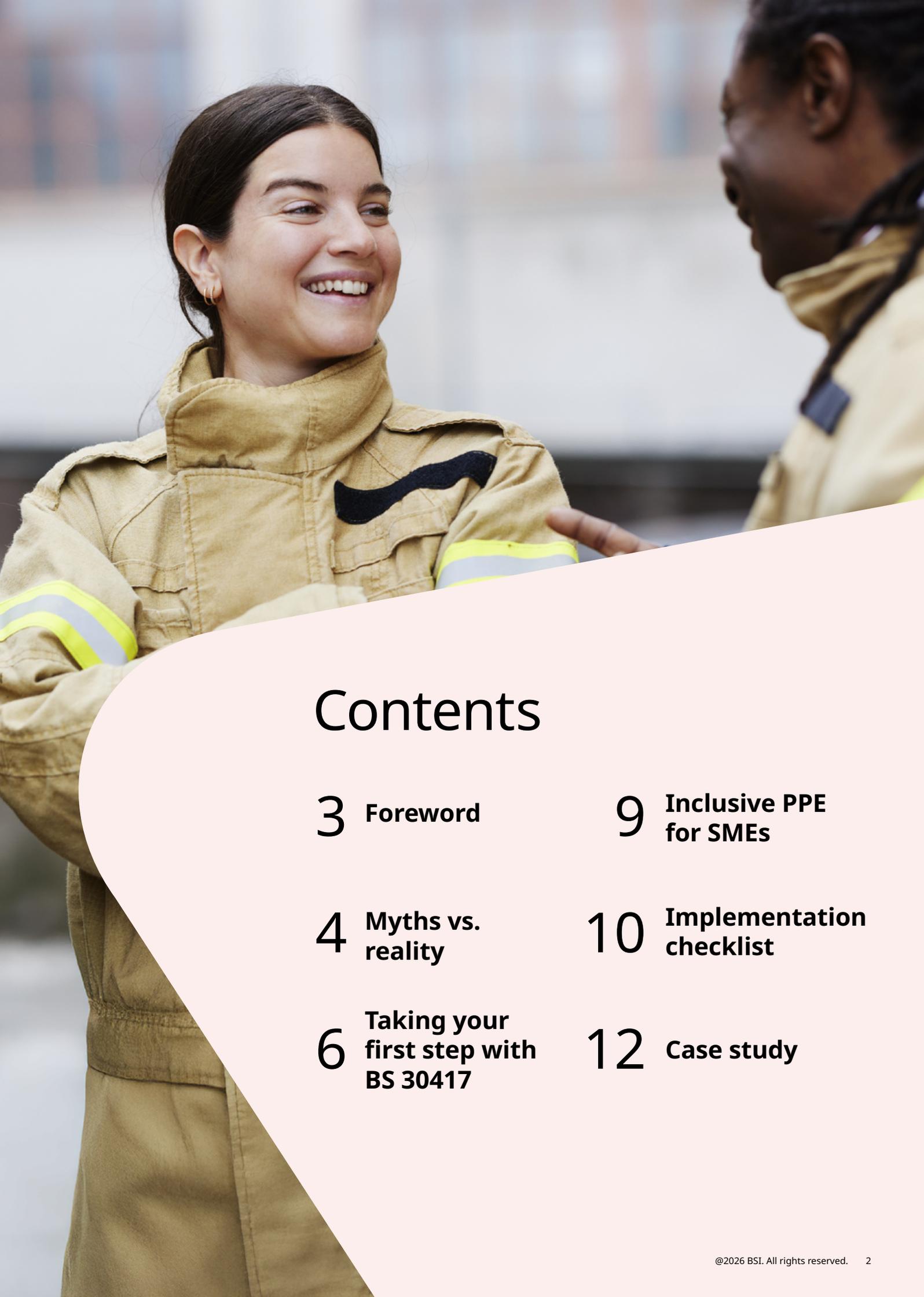




Inclusive PPE: How to Turn BS 30417 Into Action

BS 30417
companion guide





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Foreword



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It was my absolute privilege to be Chair of the Drafting Panel for BS 30417, engaging with end-users, NGOs, trade unions, suppliers, industry associations and standards makers - a diverse representation of those affected by inclusive PPE - to gain insight into the challenges and opportunities this standard can address.

For too long, inclusive PPE has been deemed too difficult, too expensive, or both – this standard is designed to address these issues by offering practical implementation advice. In my experience, it is often the simplest solutions that can have the greatest impact, but these require a change in mindset and, often, culture.

Since the official and Parliamentary launches of the standard, the level of engagement, support and interest has provided an overwhelming reminder of the impact of the standard and how it will change millions of people’s working lives for the better.

Employers are thinking about how this can be applied to their PPE provision processes, and about different wearer groups that would benefit (even beyond PPE).

Implementation of the standard will ensure employers can attract and retain talent across their diverse workforces. In addition, demonstrating they are compliant with the standard will help future tendering for public sector contracts.

NGOs, trade unions and worker representatives have been given a tool that allows them to prioritise implementation of inclusive workwear, while suppliers are talking about what they offer now, and what they’ll develop to help buyers and employers meet their diverse workforce needs.

This standard is designed to give guidance to companies and individuals providing PPE, helping organisations be more compliant and competitive in their markets.

Attracting and retaining talent requires accommodation and support for diverse workforces, therefore, inclusive PPE has a critical role to play.

The standard provides practical ways to develop a more inclusive culture around the provision of PPE – through engaging diverse workforces, creating a sense of belonging and mental wellbeing, and supporting physical and physiological needs through the provision of inclusive PPE.

As well as providing a range of ideas for a cultural change within a business, the standard provides a step-by-step guide (from pre-procurement and evaluation processes, through to delivery and ongoing supply for those goods), supporting organisations in better understanding how to:

- 1 Understand what their workforce looks like and what the workforce needs are
- 2 Evaluate suppliers and their inclusive PPE offering
- 3 Continuously engage with their workforce

Continuing to assess both the long- and short-term changing needs of the workforce is key to the ongoing success of an inclusive PPE programme.

By engaging with the standard and embedding its principles into everyday practice, organisations can help to create workplaces where safety and inclusivity is the norm, rather than the exception, across all sectors.

Now is the time to use BS 30417 as a catalyst for change.



Natalie Wilson

Chair of the BS 30417 Drafting Panel
and Founder of Workwear Solutions
International

Myths vs. reality

Providing inclusive PPE can be perceived as a multifaceted challenge which employers can do little to change, particularly when navigating common misconceptions. Here, we separate fact from fiction.

1 *"It doesn't matter if people wear PPE that's too big"*

Fact: Wearing PPE that is too big, or otherwise ill-fitting, can compromise the safety of the wearer, potentially leaving them exposed to hazards, as well as creating new risks such as trips and falls, entanglement in machinery, impaired mobility and dexterity, or obstructed vision. An accident caused by ill-fitting PPE may also affect those in proximity to the individual wearer too, increasing the risk posed by PPE that does not fit. Longer-term health issues, including strain, fatigue and musculoskeletal disorders, can also be caused by ill-fitting PPE.

2 *"Inclusive PPE is too expensive"*

Fact: Different PPE can be more expensive, not because it is inclusive, but because order volumes are usually smaller and can lead to higher per-item costs. However, inclusive PPE can also boost productivity, improve workforce morale, and increase retention, delivering a strong long-term ROI. It is important to analyse provisioning processes to help address cost concerns and improve efficiency. For example, it might be necessary to engage with more than one supplier to meet all PPE needs across the workforce in a cost-effective manner.

3 *"Women can wear the same PPE as men, just get a smaller size"*

Fact: Male and female bodies typically have anatomical and physiological differences that go well beyond size. For example, women's feet are, on average, both smaller and narrower than men's feet. Therefore, a smaller size of 'male' safety boot is unlikely to correctly fit a woman's foot, which can lead to safety risks, as well as discomfort and potential long-term health issues. Or consider for example bladder function or menstruation; clothes designed for men may not work equally well for women because of these differences in how bodies function.

4 *"If PPE doesn't fit, it's fine to make alterations yourself"*

Fact: Modifying PPE compromises the safety certification, reduces the intended protection level, and could lead to legal and liability issues. It is crucial that PPE is fit to form and should not be altered by the end-user.

5

“Inclusive PPE is only needed by a small minority of people. It’s usually a women’s issue”

Fact: Inclusive PPE addresses the needs of all diverse workforces, including men who do not have traditional ‘average’ body types, individuals with disabilities, and those with cultural or religious requirements. It is also important to remember that individual PPE requirements can be temporary and change over time, for example due to short-term illness, pregnancy or menopause.

6

“Problems caused by ill-fitting PPE only relate to physical fit and comfort”

Fact: While fit and comfort are crucial to ensure PPE is worn correctly and provides protection, ill-fitting PPE also causes other issues. Ill-fitting PPE can make it more difficult for people to do their job and so can impact quality and productivity (as well as safety). Furthermore, being given PPE that does not fit can make someone less confident or make them feel they don’t belong which can impact performance, engagement and, ultimately, talent retention. Inclusive PPE provides protection for everyone, while upholding the dignity of every individual.



Taking your first step with BS 30417

How was BS 30417 created and how should it be used?

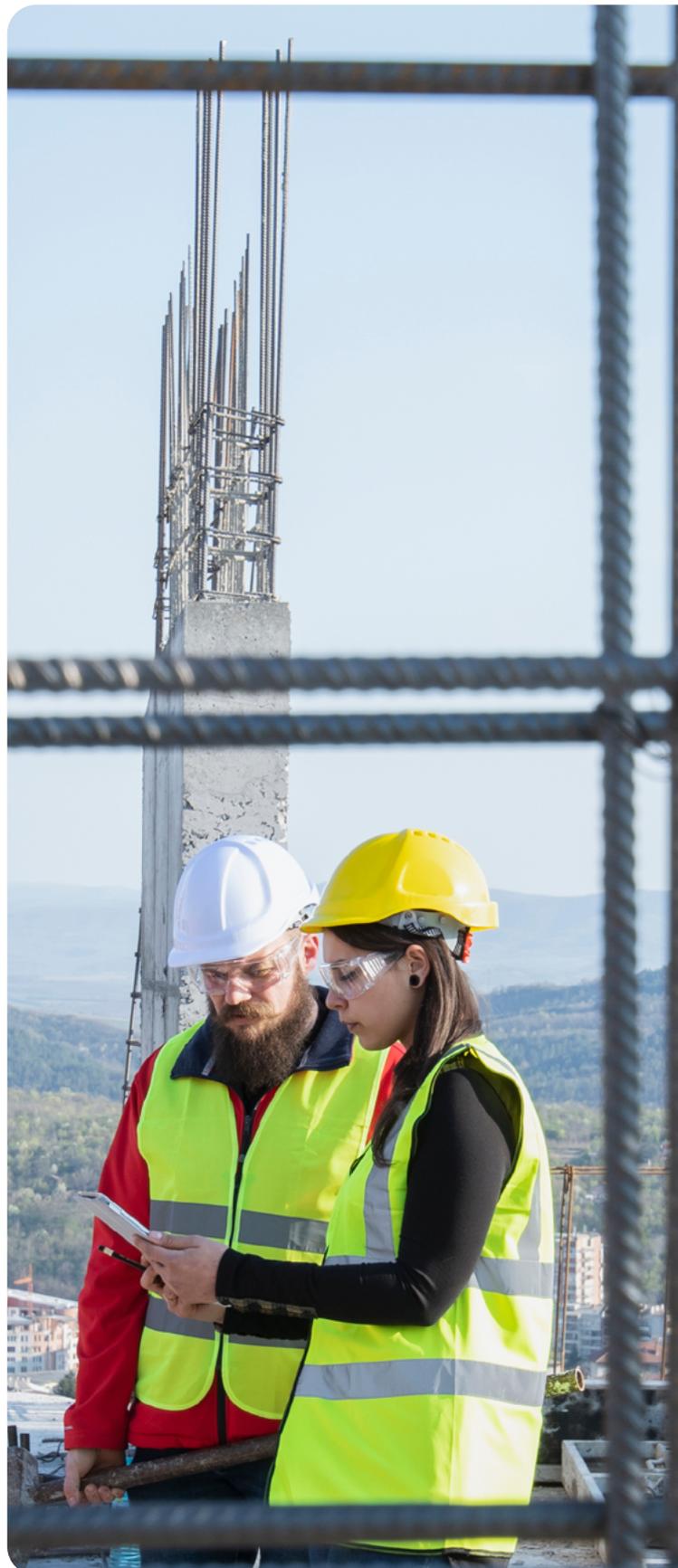
BS 30417 has been developed through a collaborative effort involving industry experts, manufacturers, end-users, health and safety professionals and policymakers.

The standard, published in 2025, offers practical recommendations to help organizations ensure their PPE is safe, well-fitting and appropriate for every user.

The standard enables you to:

- Select and issue PPE that fits and protects a diverse workforce.
- Establish processes for training, inspection, and replacement of inclusive PPE.
- Evaluate suppliers and develop inclusive specifications.
- Demonstrate compliance with health and safety, equality, and employment law.

The standard is designed to be actionable, so it can be followed step by step or used as a checklist to guide inclusive PPE implementation. If you are already providing a wide range of PPE, you can also use the standard to assess how effectively you're meeting the needs of your workforce and identify any areas for improvement.



Taking your first step with BS 30417

Who should be involved with the provision of inclusive PPE?

Certain roles have a practical responsibility for ensuring inclusive PPE is available and implemented effectively.

Key roles/functions include:

- Leaders
- HR teams
- Health and safety officers
- Procurement teams
- People/site/department managers
- Occupational health professionals
- Individual wearers

However, while employers have a legal duty to ensure appropriate, safe and well-fitting PPE is available, the effectiveness of this provision relies on everyone playing an active role. Inclusive PPE should not be viewed as the sole responsibility of a single individual or department, but rather a collective commitment.

All users, regardless of role or seniority, should feel empowered to speak up when PPE does not fit properly or fails to meet their requirements. Creating a transparent, supportive and safety-focused culture, where concerns can be raised confidently, is essential to ensuring equitable access to inclusive PPE.

Start the journey today by downloading the free standard. Share it across your organization to help build awareness and initiate meaningful change.



Taking your first step with BS 30417

How to tackle common challenges

A range of practical, cultural and organizational barriers can impact the provision of inclusive PPE. Key issues include a lack of awareness, cost perceptions, procurement limitations, workplace culture, one-size-fits-all legacy practices, and unclear responsibilities.

BS 30417 offers clear and practical guidance to help tackle these common challenges. Using it, you can:

1 Raise awareness by sharing the standard internally and making inclusivity part of PPE training.

Suggested action Add a short module on inclusive PPE to safety briefings so teams understand why it matters. Maintain records of inclusive PPE training activities, including attendance logs, training materials, assessments and competency evaluations.

2 Engage end-users through fit checks and feedback sessions before bulk orders.

Suggested action Trial PPE with a small, but diverse, group to identify sizing gaps before committing to large purchases. Ensure these tests are conducted under realistic conditions so factors such as comfort, mobility, visibility, ease of use and compatibility with other PPE items can be properly evaluated.

3 Assess purchasing processes by reviewing supplier capabilities and identify any gaps.

Suggested action When evaluating suppliers, look out for declarations of conformity, end-user information, diversity of size/fit available and other relevant documents that might be available, including product certificates and data sheets, to ensure inclusivity.

4 Clarify responsibilities and processes so they are clearly owned.

Suggested action Map out all tasks identified through BS 30417 and develop a simple responsibility matrix for each step to avoid gaps or duplication.

5 Build an inclusive culture by encouraging reporting of poor fit and acting visibly on feedback.

Suggested action Share updates when new PPE options are introduced and create opportunities for exchanging success stories, good practices and lessons learned across the organization. Recognize and reward end-users and teams that contribute to improvements.



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Inclusive PPE for SMEs

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often face practical, financial and cultural barriers that larger organizations find easier to address when it comes to the provision of inclusive PPE.

For many SMEs, typical blockers include limited budgets and restricted supplier options, especially when purchasing in smaller volumes. Cultural barriers can also play a role, with individual users reluctant to raise concerns about poor fit, as well as informal processes that can lead to inconsistent access to suitable equipment.

BS 30417 provides practical guidance for all organizations, including SMEs, that are considering the selection, fit, training and ongoing review of inclusive PPE.

For example:

- Organize regular feedback sessions and provide a suggestion box to help encourage ongoing input from end-users and understand individual PPE requirements and preferences.
- Issue a simple questionnaire/checklist to current and potential PPE supplier/s to provide comparable data, identify gaps in product ranges, and support future provisioning decisions.
- Request PPE product samples and agree trial periods before finalizing purchasing decisions.

The standard is designed to be applied to a wide range of roles so organizations with limited resources can involve multiple stakeholders in implementing inclusive PPE processes.



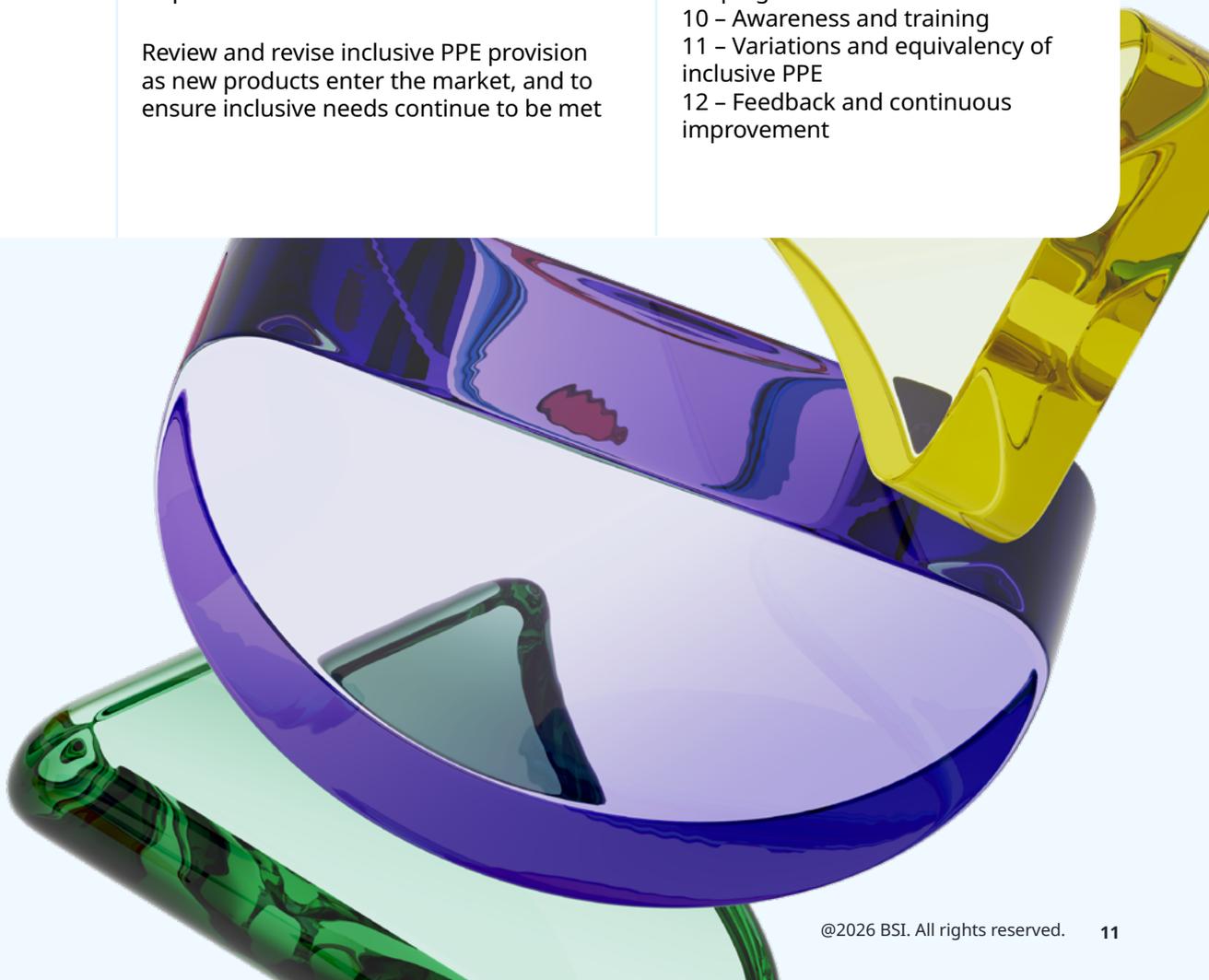
Implementation checklist



BS 30417 has been designed to support a comprehensive implementation process. Here are some important steps to consider:

Key Step/Action	Objectives	Useful BS 30417 Sections
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engage with your workforce	<p>Understand what your workforce needs are</p> <p>Obtain feedback about current PPE from worker representatives, ensuring all diverse wearer groups are involved</p>	<p>3 – Terms & Definitions</p> <p>4 – Selection and purchasing of inclusive PPE</p> <p>7 – Accessibility and accommodation</p> <p>12 – Feedback and continuous improvement</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engage all stakeholders	<p>Review feedback from workers, but also others involved in the provision of PPE internally</p> <p>Identify any internal challenges which may be blockers to the implementation of inclusive PPE, for example procurement process (single supplier that may not offer full range needed), or on-site operational issues (lack of storage space)</p>	<p>3 – Terms & Definitions</p> <p>4 – Selection and purchasing of inclusive PPE</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audit current PPE	<p>Assess the current offering in line with worker representative feedback</p> <p>Identify gaps in current PPE provision</p> <p>Identify potential internal processes/operational challenges to access</p>	<p>4 – Selection and purchasing of inclusive PPE</p> <p>12 – Feedback and continuous improvement</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update PPE requirements with inclusive PPE needs and action with suppliers	<p>Align business risk assessments and PPE assessments to update PPE requirements for the workforce</p> <p>Engage with suppliers to understand available solutions to match the needs of the workforce</p> <p>Note: this may include identifying more than one potential supplier if one cannot offer the full solution required</p>	<p>4 – Selection and purchasing of inclusive PPE</p> <p>7 – Accessibility and accommodation</p> <p>11 – Variations and equivalency of inclusive PPE</p>

Key Step/Action	Objectives	Useful BS 30417 Sections
<p> Assess inclusive PPE training and awareness needs for all stakeholders</p>	<p>Ensuring all stakeholders are aware of inclusive PPE needs, availability and accommodation – from procurement to operational site management</p> <p>Provide specific training on any requirements for particular workers/worker groups</p> <p>Provide training for direct line managers so they can offer support and signpost to the correct fitting/inclusive PPE where needed for individuals</p>	<p>4 – Selection and purchasing of inclusive PPE 5 - Fitting and adjustment 6 – Maintenance and inspection 7 – Accessibility and accommodation 8 – Longevity of inclusive PPE 9 – Documentation and record keeping 10 – Awareness and training 11 – Variations and equivalency of inclusive PPE 12 – Feedback and continuous improvement</p>
<p> Implementation of inclusive PPE requirements</p>	<p>Provide workforce with correctly fitting PPE taking into consideration individual wearer needs</p> <p>Communicate the updated inclusive PPE provision across all stakeholder groups</p>	<p>4 – Selection and purchasing of inclusive PPE 5 - Fitting and adjustment 6 – Maintenance and inspection 7 – Accessibility and accommodation 9 – Documentation and record keeping 10 – Awareness and training 11 – Variations and equivalency of inclusive PPE</p>
<p> Ongoing review of inclusive PPE requirements</p>	<p>Engage with the workforce at regular intervals to ensure inclusive PPE requirements continue to be met</p> <p>Review and revise inclusive PPE provision as new products enter the market, and to ensure inclusive needs continue to be met</p>	<p>8 – Longevity of inclusive PPE 9 – Documentation and record keeping 10 – Awareness and training 11 – Variations and equivalency of inclusive PPE 12 – Feedback and continuous improvement</p>



Making the case in the real world

Case study

Seeing BS 30417 become a reality is fantastic. I am proud to have been part of the committee that helped bring this to fruition. It is a crucial document as it highlights that PPE is about health and safety, but only when it is fit to form. PPE has to be inclusive of everyone's needs.

It is also important that the guidance is free to access, so anyone can download it whether they are a user, an employer, know someone who needs PPE or may think PPE is a requirement.

For me, the key part is education. The standard has a useful section which highlights the need to educate and take appropriate steps to help support the individuals purchasing PPE, as well as understanding the needs of PPE users. It stresses user feedback which is so important for manufactures and suppliers of PPE.

As a geo-environmental engineer, I have first-hand experience of the challenges caused by ill-fitting PPE. I typically work on construction sites, as well as on greenfield and contaminated land. Due to the varied nature of my role, my requirement for PPE can evolve as a project progresses. My PPE is critical because sometimes we cannot see contamination, and oversized PPE risks cross-contamination. I need PPE to fit correctly because it's like my second skin – the last barrier of defence – on site.

When I started out as a graduate, I had never stepped foot on a construction site. It was the biggest shock of my life.

Most people on site took one look at me, at 4'11 with ridiculously oversized PPE, and it was clear that they did not take me seriously.

My PPE did not fit properly and I became accustomed to comments like: 'Is that your dad's jacket you're borrowing?' or 'Are you wearing your dad's shoes?'. It seriously impacted my confidence.

Aside from the emotional toll, I've had situations where I've struggled to walk because my boots were too big and heavy. Even though they were a size 3, they were probably designed to a male's foot shape. I have also had trousers that are far too long, so I rolled them up to avoid tripping. However, by rolling them up, the visibility strip was no longer visible, which posed a serious safety risk.

I recently tried some trousers that fit me correctly and it has genuinely changed my life. It feels like wearing normal clothes. It was shocking to think I had normalized rolling up my trousers at the ends and at the hip, ultimately compromising my safety.

Adopting inclusive PPE is such a small change for a big return. Employers are likely to see a happier workforce because their people are confident that their physical safety, welfare and mental health needs are considered. Importantly, they'll know that they are heard.

I truly believe that BS 30417 will challenge the status quo. There is no excuse now.



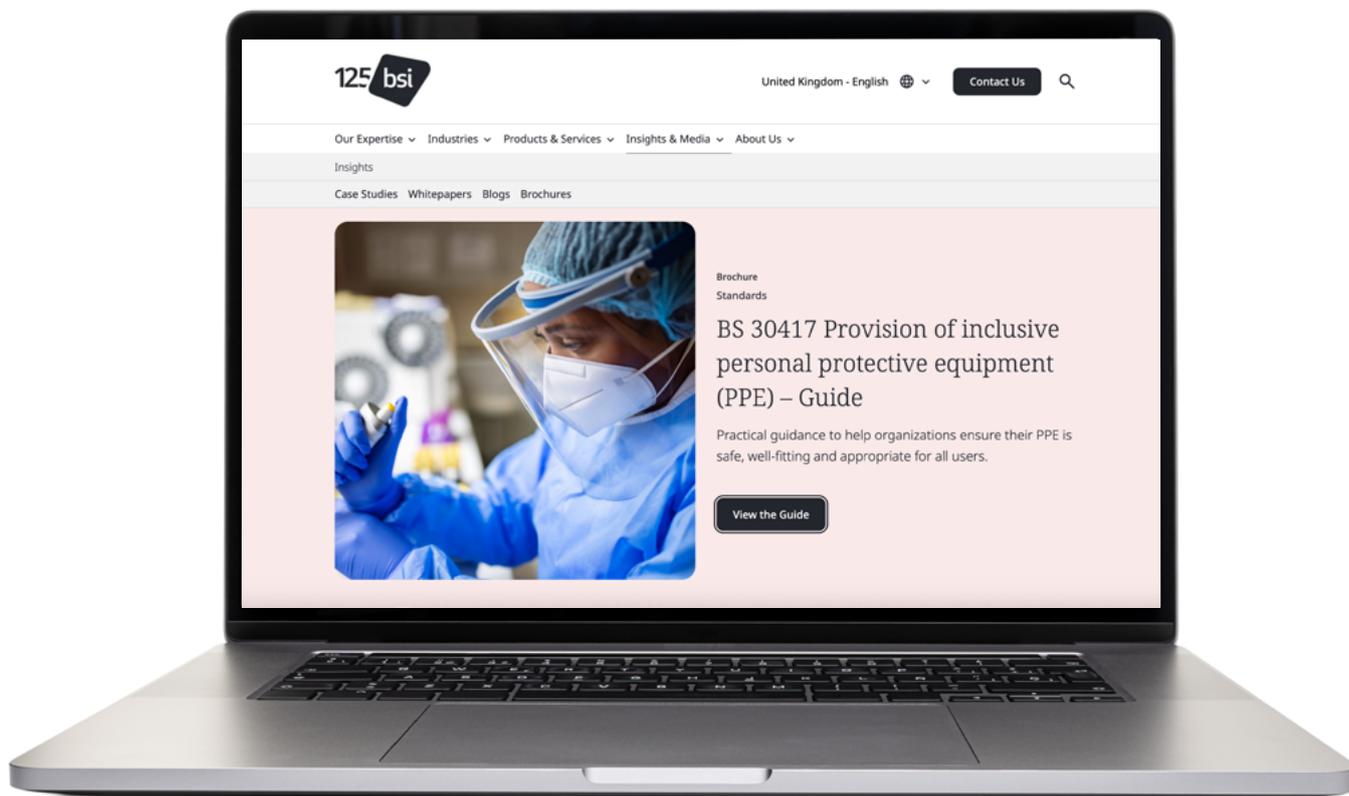
Rowshi Hussain
Geo-Environmental Engineer
Cundall

BS 30417

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