

Saturday, 28th March 2020

SCUK urges NHS Trusts around the UK to provide alternative PPE for Sikhs Healthcare Professionals

Further to our earlier statement, we have further consulted Sikh consultant doctors working in the NHS where their Trusts have quite rightly provided alternative safety masks. This best practice is a useful option to allow continuity of specialist function in these challenged times we have been advised that Powdered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs) or Controlled Air Purifying Respirators (CAPRs) are alternatives providing an equivalent protection factor to FFP3. Healthcare professionals that fail the 'fit-test' for the FFP3 Masks because of their facial anatomy or facial hair are able to work with COVID-19 patients if they are provided with this alternative personal protective equipment (PPE).

As we mentioned previously, for Sikh healthcare professionals, their faith and professional duty are intrinsically interlinked. Many Sikhs working in the NHS have expressed their strong desire to continue to use their skills and experience working alongside their colleagues on the frontline of the NHS during this critical time. It is unfair to ask them to choose between their faith and their vocation when alternative solutions are available.

Therefore we urge NHS trusts to make the necessary reasonable adjustments/provisions for all those individuals that require alternatives because of their faith or otherwise.

We continue to be thankful and fully supportive of our NHS. We have continuously urged Gurdwaras and Sikh organisations to support and provide meals to hospitals, healthcare staff and the wider community.

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