

Production starts on world-leading respirators for UK armed forces

Wiltshire-based Avon Protection Ltd. will manufacture and supply the potentially life-saving masks over the remaining period of the five-year contract, having completed 18 months of successful tests and trials.

The £16 million contract has created 22 new jobs at Avon Protection – three management and 19 shop-floor production – as well as helping to sustain their 180 employees in Melksham.

Defence Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Last year the MOD spent over £5.2 billion with UK industry in the South West. This multi-million-pound contract will boost this contribution even further and support over 200 jobs in Melksham.

These lightweight respirators protect our service personnel while ensuring they can communicate effectively on the battlefield.

Dr Simon Dakin, Director ISTAR at DE&S, said:

We are very pleased the production and supply of General Service Respirators to our servicemen and women will continue for years to come.

The fact this is a product manufactured in the UK for the UK armed forces is one of many positives from this five-year partnership with Avon Protection.

The design of the twin-canister, single-visor mask has been made with the safety and comfort of troops in mind, using high-performance filtration technology to ensure they are protected while still being able to communicate easily on the frontline.

Colonel Timothy Chapman, Assistant Head C-CBRN Army HQ, said:

The Army, on behalf of Defence, are pleased to welcome Avon Protection as industry partners to continue the delivery of the excellent GSR to all British forces in order to protect sailors, soldiers, airmen and women from a range of inhalation threats.

The General Service Respirators (GSRs) are personally fitted and issued to all UK service personnel across the Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. The company is aiming to produce an initial batch of 15,380 GSRs over the next year and will also supply in-service support for the equipment.

Service personnel on operations are deployed with GSRs as a precautionary measure.