



Forestry Commission Partnership Opportunity:

Developing a range of inclusive,
specialist female-fit PPE

July 2022



Forestry England



Introduction

The Forestry Commission are the government's forestry experts for England, and the largest land manager in the country, caring for over 250,000 hectares of woodland. We have a vision of a truly inclusive and diverse forestry sector, where all workers feel valued, safe and welcome. With this in mind, we are looking for an industry partner that shares this vision, and will work with us to create a range of specialist chainsaw PPE designed specifically for women.

The safety of our staff is our highest priority, and we take pride in supplying them with the very best PPE to keep them safe while they care for our beautiful forest landscapes.

We value equality amongst our workforce and prioritise all staff equally. 44% of our current workforce identify as female (around 630 individuals), and we are seeking a health and safety partner to help us develop a range of high-quality PPE, tailored specifically for a female fit.

And, we're not alone. We know that 33% of staff (equivalent to 297 people) are female in Forestry & Land Scotland and 45% of staff (equivalent to 855 people) are female in Natural Resources Wales. These three government organisations alone represent a significant pool of female staff, with many more represented across the private sector and other government departments.



The Opportunity

We are looking for a partner to work collaboratively on initially developing four key pieces of PPE, with specific consideration for female sizing and body shape:

- Chainsaw gloves
- Chainsaw boots
- Chainsaw trousers
- General workwear jacket

We anticipate these items will benefit Forestry Commission staff, as well as female operational staff right across the industry.

We are willing to invest up to £25,000 towards creating this range and would like to work collaboratively with a recognised industry partner on developing these designs. We are looking for a partner that shares our vision to help lead the industry towards catering for female staff, thereby attracting the very best workforce from an inclusive and diverse pool of talent.

Once the range is complete, we will order the products for our female staff. In addition, we will promote and endorse these products across our channels, offering you a route to a wider market in private and government organisations.

Partnership Objectives

- To work with an industry partner to develop female fit chainsaw gloves, chainsaw boots, chainsaw trousers and a general workwear jacket, that will be made available to Forestry Commission employees, and those in other private and government organisations.
- To demonstrate industry leadership, both by the Forestry Commission and our chosen partner, by demonstrating a move towards a safer, more inclusive forestry sector.
- To widely promote and endorse the range, starting to redefine what safety at work looks like within the forestry sector.



Partnership Benefits

In return for collaborative, forward-thinking working, we will offer our partner some reciprocal benefits, including:

- **A route to market** - We will help secure a wider route to market for these products, by promoting and endorsing them widely across our channels;
- **Industry leadership** - Your association with the Forestry Commission on this important project will demonstrate your visionary industry leadership - a key message of our supporting publicity campaign for this project
- **Publicity** - The Forestry Commission will be able to provide the successful partnership-holder with media reach across a number of different platforms and channels, which hold a significant following. Our joint communications campaign could include:
 - Video and photography content telling the story of the behind-the-scenes design process for the range showing the depth of your commitment to inclusivity;
 - Video and photography content of our staff using the items in their day-day-day jobs, demonstrating authenticity;
 - Exposure of the partnership and new products via 'good news' stories shared with our internal audience as well as with external press, including approaches to mainstream media such as BBC R4's Woman's Hour.
- **Working with ambassadors and industry leaders** to help bring our campaigns and our shared story to a bigger audience.



363 million visits
across 1,500 forest and
woodland sites per year



462k email
database reach



1.4m website
views per month



48k +
member households



136k +
followers



69k +
followers



45k +
followers



Background – Women in Forestry

The Forestry Commission are the government's forestry experts for England, responsible for protecting, improving and expanding England's woodlands and increasing their value for people, nature and the economy. Across Forestry Commission England we have over 1,400 staff.

Since 2019, the Forestry Commission has led and developed a Women in Forestry programme, with the core aim of making positive changes for women in our workplaces, including improving welfare by offering access to appropriate workwear and PPE for all job roles and all staff.

In late 2021 we carried out an internal survey to specifically look at use of PPE amongst our staff. We discovered that,

- 64% of respondents have encountered difficulties in accessing PPE which fits their body shape properly at some point in the past;
- Around 27% of respondents felt that chainsaw-specific PPE they have access to is unacceptable in terms of its appropriateness for use and fit;
- 20% also felt that general use (i.e. non-chainsaw PPE) was in some way unacceptable; and
- A number of participants commented that items are not being designed with female body shapes in mind, with sizes often too large or created with a standard male body shape in mind.

Some of the comments made by respondents summed up the issue that female PPE-wearers currently face in our industry:

"(I) want to see a lot more women in this industry feeling comfortable and like they belong. I know it's only clothing but it's still a barrier that we have to overcome...among the many others! I feel like it would be an amazing step in the right direction to get some inclusive PPE!"

"I feel like the message, throughout the industry is that women can work with chainsaws but only at a low level... as an industry as a whole I don't believe there will ever be equality when the underlying message from those who make PPE etc is that we are not equal and that we are not good enough"



Summary and timeline

We have a vision for a forestry industry that is truly diverse, inclusive, welcoming and safe for all. With that in mind, we are prepared to invest up to £25,000 towards the development of a specialist female-fit PPE range. We are looking for a collaborative partner to help us change the industry to reflect the needs of a contemporary workforce.

In return, we will provide positive profile, PR and product endorsement to help our partner find as wide a customer base as possible for these new products.

We want to work with a supplier who can help us develop these key items of PPE to begin to improve the offer for our dedicated female employees and foster an even more inclusive place to work. By working with us you'll benefit from not only investment and exposure as detailed above but also from being involved in the start of something truly helping to improve inclusivity and access to suitable PPE for all working in our industry.

We want to hear from you by 23rd September 2022 and we hope to start work on developing the range from early November 2022 with a contract for purchasing of the items expected to be in place from November 2023 (subject to the new garments availability).

Please send your response to emily.coffin@forestryengland.uk by 23rd September 2022.