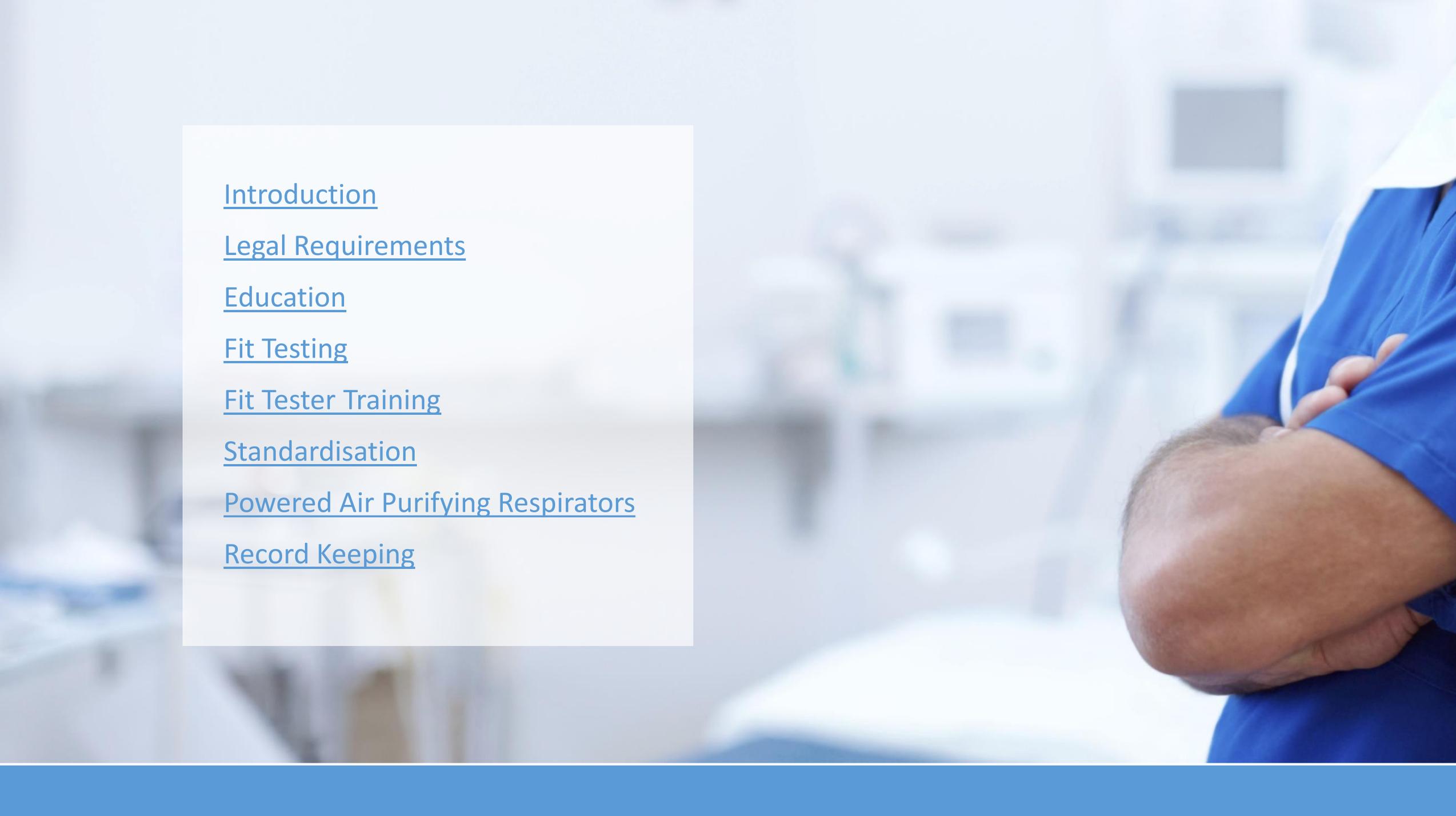




# Infection Prevention Respiratory Hazards

A person wearing a blue uniform with their arms crossed, standing in a clinical or hospital setting. The background is blurred, showing medical equipment and a clean environment.

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# Introduction

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Avoidable work-related respiratory conditions account for around **3 million deaths** world-wide and 12,000 deaths in the UK every single year.

In the healthcare environment, staff are regularly exposed to numerous respiratory risks such as airborne pathogens like influenza and multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, or exposure to hazardous chemicals like formaldehyde and peracetic acid. When air ventilation and hazard extraction is not possible, **Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)** is used as the last line of defense in protecting workers from potential respiratory hazards.

**In this eBook we will explore some of the important aspects of RPE and respiratory infection control - vital for keeping employees and patients safe and for organisations to fully comply with HSE regulations.**

Staff caring for patients with potentially infectious respiratory conditions will require protection in the form of a P3 respirator.

Staff performing Aerosol-Generating Procedures may also need to use a respirator.

“An FFP3 respirator should be worn by frontline staff when carrying out a potentially infectious aerosol-generating procedure. Where a patient is known/suspected to have an infection spread via the aerosol route or when caring for patients known/suspected to be infected with a newly identified respiratory virus” - *HSE*



# Legal Requirements

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The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require organisations to provide and maintain a safe working environment for their workers.

**In the UK, it is a legal requirement that all staff required to wear Respiratory Protective Equipment at work be Fit Tested, provided appropriate training and have access to the correct apparatus that is adequate for the hazard and suitable for the person.**

Failing to comply with HSE and COSHH guidelines could lead to serious fines, employee ill-health or even death.

# Education

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Understanding Respiratory Protective Equipment, how it should be used and what type is appropriate for a given situation are all fundamental in keeping you and your workforce safe from harm.

But to do this, workers, managers and CEOs all need to be made aware of the fundamental regulations surrounding RPE and the potentially fatal dangers of getting it wrong.

**It is our mission to ensure every person who needs RPE in the workplace is aware of the potential dangers and has access to adequate and suitable equipment.**





Full Support provide a number of different awareness, training and education courses, seminars and webinars to meet a variety of needs.

Passionate about health & safety at work and raising awareness for respiratory issues, our Fit2Fit accredited experts have trained over **100,000** people across the UK so far, equipping people with the necessary skills to be competent, confident and compliant in the safe use of RPE.

Utilising a combination of face-to-face, webinar, theory and practical training; whatever your RPE education needs, we're here to help.

[Get in touch to find out more](#)

# Fit Testing

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Tight-fitting RPE works by forming a seal between the respirator and the wearer's face. This ensures that when air is breathed in, it is forced through the filtering material of the respirator – capturing hazardous substances in the filter only letting clean air into your lungs.

However, the smallest of gaps caused by a respirator not fitting properly could let contaminated air in and endanger the wearer's health.

Face shape, size, facial hair, scarring and donning technique are all common reasons as to why a respirator might not perfectly fit and no single respirator model will fit every person's face.

**To ensure a tight-fitting respirator fits and is suitable for an individual, they must be Fit Tested.**

There are two predominant methods of Fit Testing – the Qualitative (taste) method and the Quantitative (particle counting) method.

# The Qualitative Method

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The Qualitative Fit Test method is a simple pass/fail **taste test** to assess whether or not a tight-fitting single-use or half-face respirator is suitable for an individual.

This method involves the tester intermittently spraying a strong-tasting aerosol solution at the subject's face while they undertake a series of exercises, designed to mimic common strains on the seal of their mask.

Relatively simple to set-up, perform and replicate, the Qualitative method can be a cost-effective way of cascading testing across large organisations, such as hospitals.





## The Quantitative Method

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The Quantitative Fit Test method is a more objective way of assessing the suitability of a respirator for an individual, by measuring the number of particles inside and outside the respirator.

Using a PortaCount™ machine, this method counts the number of particles inside and outside the respirator mask while the subject undertakes a series of exercises, designed to mimic common strains on the seal of their mask. The difference between the outside and inside readings indicate the *Fit Factor* - revealing how effective the respirator is fitting.

Accurate, detailed and suitable for all respirator types, the Quantitative method is ideal for Fit Testing people requiring full-face respirators.

In addition to selling Qualitative Fit Test Kits and Quantitative PortaCount™ devices, Full Support offer a comprehensive Fit Testing service for both Qualitative and Quantative Fit Testing, on-site or at our Northamptonshire based Fit Test Centre.

[Get in touch to find out more](#)



# Fit Tester Training

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When many members of staff require RPE, organisations such as in hospitals face a particularly difficult challenge to ensure that all workers requiring RPE are Fit Tested.

To help in the process, Full Support provide a Fit Tester Training programme, for the cascading of Fit Testing quickly, efficiently and cost effectively across large organisations.

Independently assessed and certified by the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) service and delivered by fully Fit2Fit accredited trainers, our Fit Tester Training course trains delegates how to competently, confidently and compliantly Fit Test colleagues using the Qualitative Fit Testing method.

[Get in touch to find out more](#)

# Standardisation

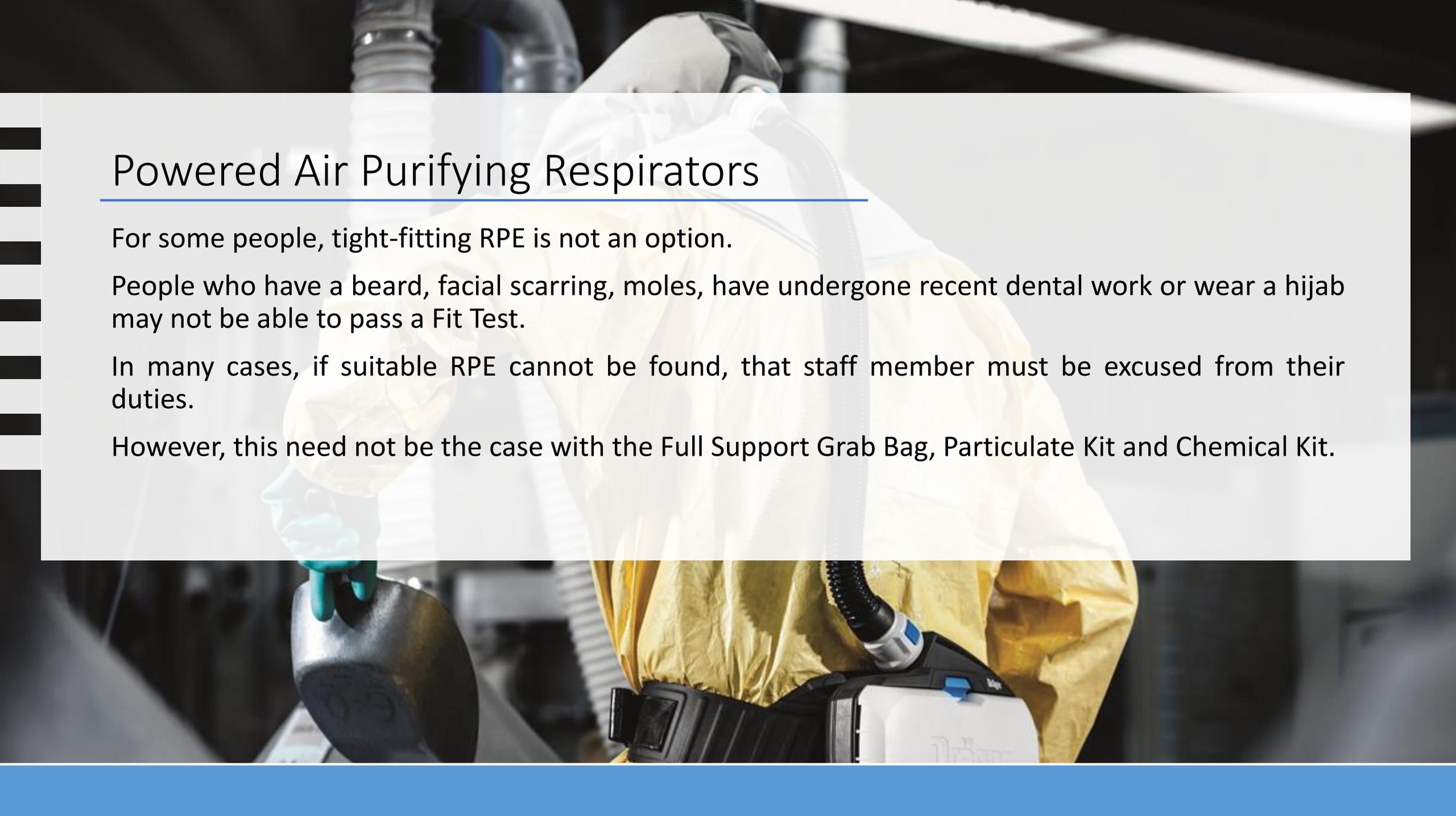
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As respirators vary in size, shape, materials and fitting, Fit Testing is brand, make and model specific. This means that once a person has been Fit Tested they must only wear that exact make/model of respirator to ensure a good fit and to be HSE compliant.

**Standardising your organisation's respirator selection is a strategically viable way to protect your staff from accidentally wearing a respirator that they have not been Fit Tested for.**

With a full range of respirators suitable for every situation, we can help:

- minimise the risk of inadequate protection through accidental selection
- help you to adhere to legal requirements and HSE guidelines
- protect your staff and reduce staff respiratory related illness

A person wearing a white protective suit and a respirator is working in a laboratory. The person is holding a metal object, possibly a piece of equipment, and is looking down at it. The background is a blurred laboratory setting with various pieces of equipment and pipes.

## Powered Air Purifying Respirators

For some people, tight-fitting RPE is not an option.

People who have a beard, facial scarring, moles, have undergone recent dental work or wear a hijab may not be able to pass a Fit Test.

In many cases, if suitable RPE cannot be found, that staff member must be excused from their duties.

However, this need not be the case with the Full Support Grab Bag, Particulate Kit and Chemical Kit.



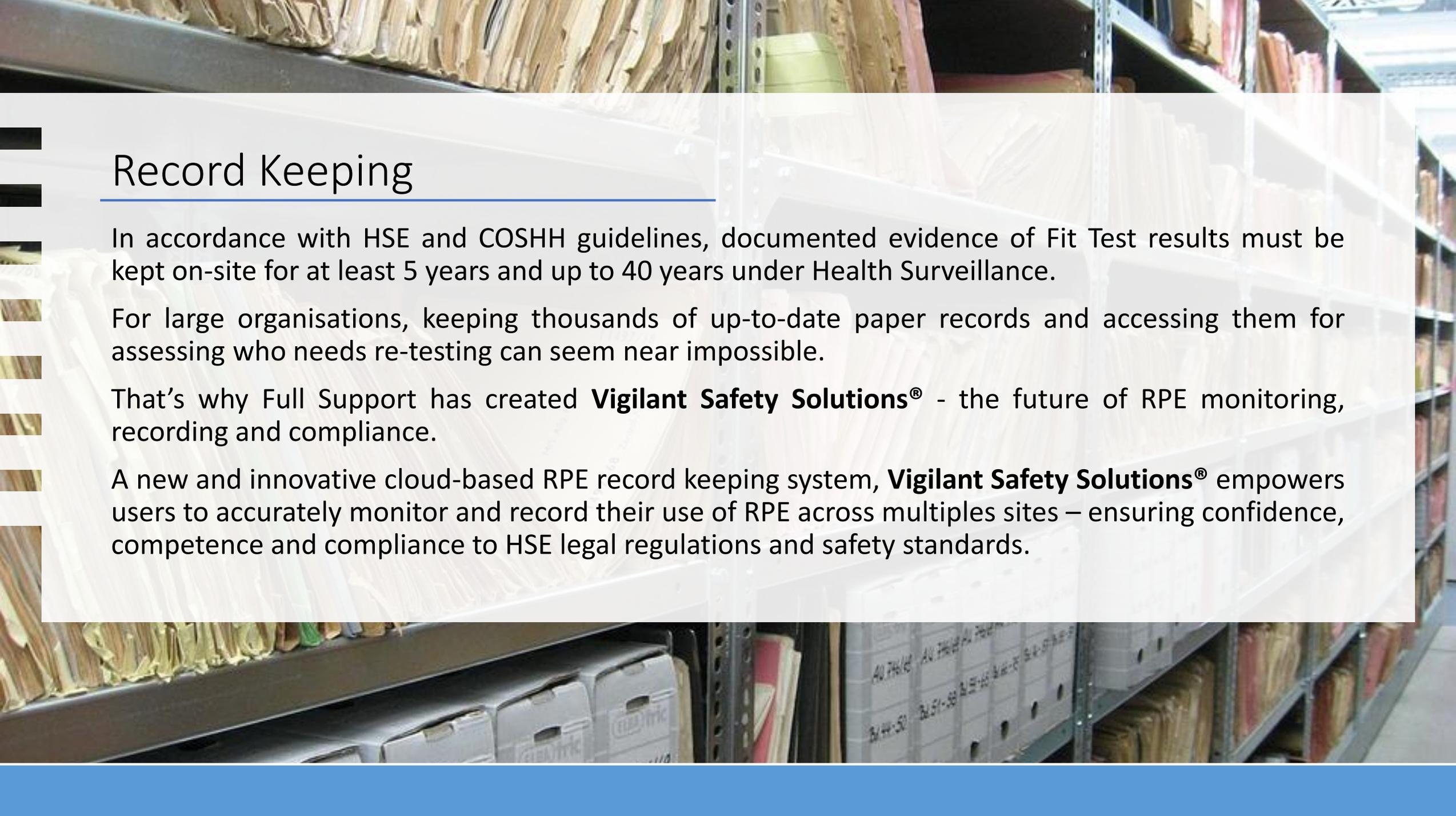
[Get in touch to find out more](#)

Unlike tight-fitting RPE, Full Support's RPE Kits do **not** require Fit Testing.

Instead of relying on a tight-fitting seal, loose-fitting respirators draw contaminated air in to a filter using a battery unit and force the cleaned air along a tube in to the wearer's hood/helmet.

Not needing to be Fit Tested makes these kits ideal for:

- Departments requiring infrequent respiratory protection
- Wards with a high level of worker turnover or bank staff
- Emergency hazard protection



## Record Keeping

In accordance with HSE and COSHH guidelines, documented evidence of Fit Test results must be kept on-site for at least 5 years and up to 40 years under Health Surveillance.

For large organisations, keeping thousands of up-to-date paper records and accessing them for assessing who needs re-testing can seem near impossible.

That's why Full Support has created **Vigilant Safety Solutions**<sup>®</sup> - the future of RPE monitoring, recording and compliance.

A new and innovative cloud-based RPE record keeping system, **Vigilant Safety Solutions**<sup>®</sup> empowers users to accurately monitor and record their use of RPE across multiples sites – ensuring confidence, competence and compliance to HSE legal regulations and safety standards.

## Data Management Centre

Vigilant Safety Solutions® is an innovative and dynamic platform, ensuring organisational compliance with legal standards and internal policies.

## Reporting Suite

Accessible via any internet-connected PC and a log-in, the Reporting Suite lets clients instantly monitor and report on their organisation's RPE records in real-time.

## Field Application

Pre-installed onto Android tablets, the Field Application aspect is an essential tool for undertaking Qualitative and Quantitative Fit Testing, monitoring and recording.



[Click here to find out more](#)



[fullsupportgroup.com](http://fullsupportgroup.com)

+44(0) 1933 672 180

[info@fullsupportgroup.com](mailto:info@fullsupportgroup.com)

