



**Buyer Beware**

**Our Standards. Your Guarantee**

## **In the context of extraordinary and urgent demand for cleaning and hygiene products, how do buyers make sure they get product fit for purpose?**

Welcome.

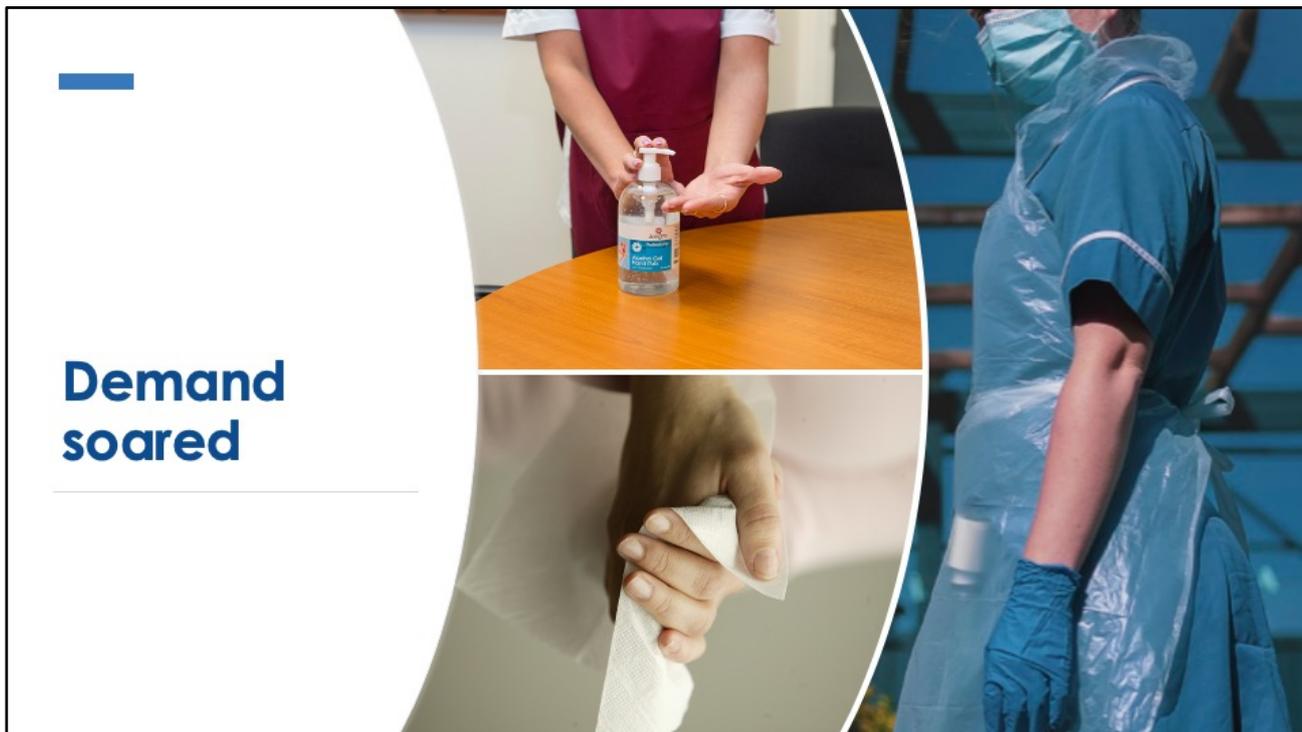
The extraordinary and urgent demand for cleaning and hygiene products created by the coronavirus has made it incredibly difficult for buyers of these products to differentiate between the unscrupulous and those that trading ethically.

In this presentation I will set out the challenge that it causes, before offering buyers practical guidance. My goal is to answer the question: in the context of the extraordinary and urgent demand for cleaning and hygiene products, how can you be certain to get product that are safe and fit for purpose?



The coronavirus pandemic has changed the nation's view of cleaning and hygiene.

More than ever, we now understood the importance of cleanliness and hygiene. Cleaning operatives were on the frontline, keeping our work, public places, and health and care settings clean and safe. There is a new respect for their skills, dedication and expertise, something all of us working in this industry can really celebrate.



The impact on our members was immediate.

Almost overnight, demand for cleaning and hygiene products soared. The term PPE was introduced to most of us for the first time. People needed hand sanitisers, gloves, soft tissue, aprons, gowns, wipes, clinical waste sacks, and cleaning chemicals.

And they needed them now. Panic buying on toilet paper ensued.

This urgent and unprecedented demand presented a huge challenge to our manufacturing and distributor members.

Struggling with the constraints of the lock down themselves, they worked hard to manufacture and distribute to the frontline these essential products as quickly as possible. But the raw materials and component parts were under severe pressure. Sprays and soap pumps, primarily manufactured in China and Italy, were in short supply. Nitrile disposable gloves and single use aprons have traditionally been made in the Far East and the supply of both were hit by the combination of demand going up as supply was constricted by lock downs in China and Malaysia. Supply of non-woven wipes spiked. Most of these wipes are polypropylene based, a material which

is also integral in the manufacture of face masks. This extra demand pushed supply chains to the limits. Demand for biocides and virucides escalated at a time when the UK production capacity for these products had declined.

The pressure was intense. Understanding this and the intrinsic complexities of the supply chain, our members knew it was impossible, in the short term, to satisfy all orders. Instead of hiking prices and chasing the highest payer, they stayed loyal to their long term customers, introducing rationing where and when necessary.

They also worked hard to keep their customers informed. With their input, we, the CHSA, published bulletins about availability shortages in the supply chain, giving end users the information they needed to plan under extremely difficult circumstances.

**ROGUE TRADER**

In contrast, others just saw an enormous opportunity to make a quick buck

For some it was a way to generate much needed turnover when their nominal income streams dried up. It's understandable, but worrying when you remember they don't know the market, the regulations or what constitutes what is fit for purpose product

Others saw a golden opportunity they didn't want to miss, whatever the consequences. They set up new companies overnight. Claiming expertise and knowledge and without being able to check or audit their suppliers, even if they wanted to. They imported product unseen and sold them online, often with a very high mark ups.

Much more troubling though were the dubious claims of product efficacy and the way many products simply did not meet the regulatory requirements. This was also not helped by the Brexit fog of transferring EU regulations back onto UK Statute books.

Products regulated outside Europe such as in the US or Australia must comply with Biocidal Products Regulations in the UK. Do not assume products passed in one

country will be acceptable in another. Europe has higher standards than other parts of the world.

## A hand sanitiser wild west



The UK hand sanitiser market has been described as a 'Wild West'. Medical alcohol supply became very tight. The Government allowed the rules to be relaxed on alcohol content from 70% to 60%.

All sorts of organisations, with no relevant track record, turned to producing alcohol hand gels.

Extraordinary claims were made for cleaning chemicals. These included keeping an area clean and sterile for days if not months. In the midst of the uncertainty and fear around the virus, it's no wonder buyers were grabbing at these products. After all, they were being described as the panacea.

The truth, though, is different. A product may keep a surface sterile for days ... but only in laboratory conditions with very specific testing protocols. In a real environment, inhabited by people, it's not possible. People will always, unless wrapped up like a crime scene investigator, bring in contaminants which will deposit on previously sanitized surfaces making them dirty again.

New methods of applying chemicals have also been developed. Fogging and misting were proposed as a quick and effective way to apply the cleaning chemical, but the

truth is this is more suited to applying cleaning chemicals in operating theatres than night clubs. After all, the dominant method of transmission of the virus is directly, person to person hence the Government's recommendation for social distancing and face masks.

## Extreme shortages of fit for purpose product



We all remember the shortages of PPE or personal protective equipment at the beginning of the pandemic. We were days away from the NHS running out of gowns and aprons.

Demand for gloves, aprons and masks was extreme, as much as six times normal demand on aprons. Some companies who had experience with importing products from the Far East but none relating to masks and gowns etc quickly placed orders for containers of these products. But as it turned out some had fake or no CE marks. This is the certification mark that indicates conformance with the European Union directives on health and safety and environmental protection.

Buying product from new, unknown suppliers claiming to have good stocks of compliant or effective products might have sounded good, but did they offer the user protection from the virus.

The statutory bodies in the UK who regulate have enforcing powers are MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency ), HSE and Trading Standards.

## The challenge for buyers

Exceptional  
and urgent  
demand

+

Rationing

=

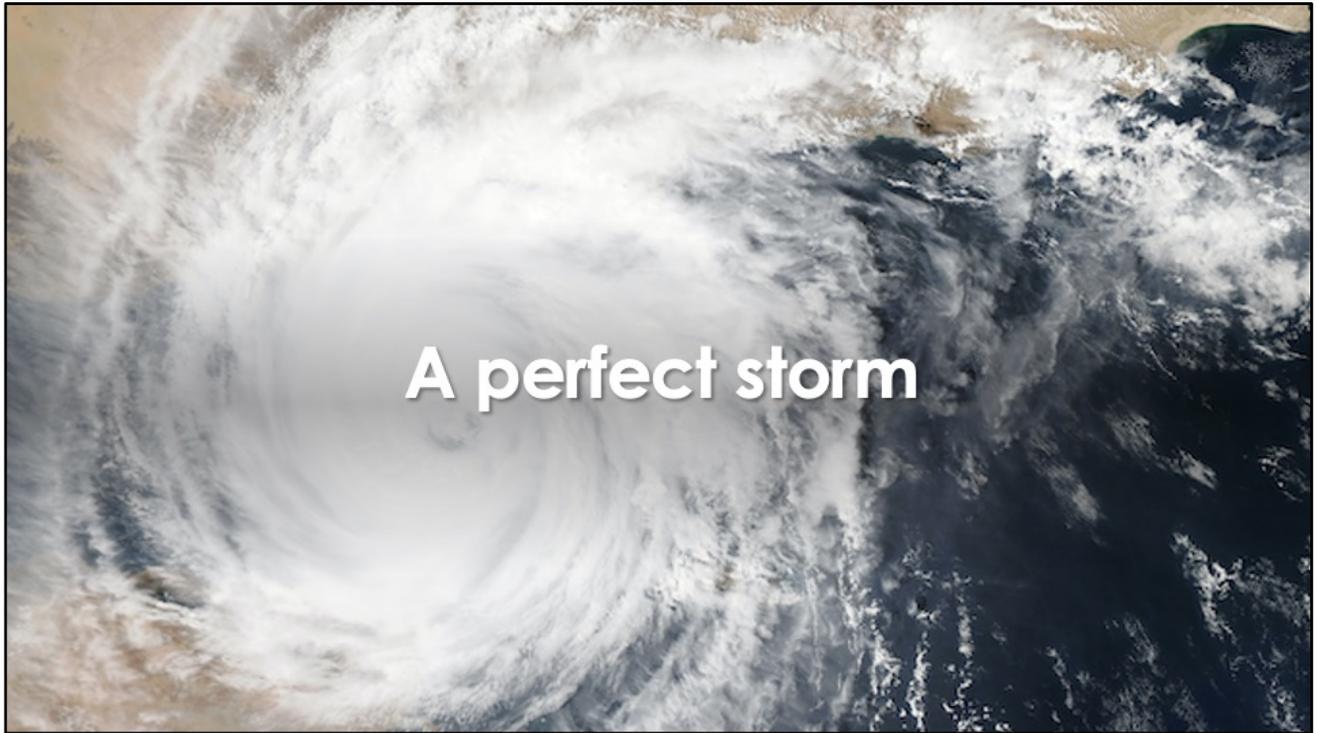
From  
anyone  
who's  
selling it

At the same time, with need being so urgent, buyers had to find a way to get hold of products.

In the face of shortages and rationing, it was natural, and incredibly tempting, to look elsewhere. But working from home, without access to the usual resources and product being needed 'yesterday', following the normal procedures, including checks and audits on both product and supplier, seemed impossible.

Buying from whoever was selling the product, whether or not you've even heard of them before, seemed essential.

Problems were inevitable.



It was a perfect storm.

Rogue traders were making all sorts of claims and buyers, without the resources or time to check, were faced with the very real challenge of differentiating between the unscrupulous and those trading ethically.

## Our advice – be cautious

1. Be sceptical about product claims
2. Ask for evidence to back up product claims
3. Ask for the CE declaration and test reports
4. Buy from a reputable supplier with a track record
5. Get customer references

Our advice is simple - be cautious.

1. Be sceptical about product claims. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
2. Ask for evidence to back up product claims. A reputable manufacturer will be pleased and able to show you data sheets or other relevant evidence to support the claims made for the product. You should not need to go hunting for them , they should be downloadable on their website
3. Ask for the CE declaration and any other EN test reports to show conformance to specification. Check if the testing was carried out in the UK or Europe. Ask for clarity on dilution rates and how long it took in Lab tests to achieve the 99.999% kill rate
4. Buy from a reputable supplier with a track record.
5. Getting previous customer testimonials is always a good idea.

## **Our Standards. Your Guarantee.**

The CHSA is a membership organisation of about 200 manufacturers and distributors of cleaning and hygiene products. Our membership ranges from global multinationals to small independent businesses.

Our commitment to standards began in 1997 when we launched our first Accreditation Scheme for soft tissue followed by refuse sacks in 2001, Mops in 2006, Distributors 2017 and Chemical suppliers 2020. With an almost 25 year track record of driving up and maintaining standards in our sector, we know how to make sure you get products that are fit for purpose.

We are launching an Accreditation Schemes for General Manufacturers of cleaning equipment such as hand dryers, power washers and the like in 2022.



All CHSA manufacturing members commit to making sure the labelling on every product clearly indicates dimensions and quantity, guaranteeing ‘what’s on the box is what’s in the box’.

Manufacturers of paper-based and woven products guarantee the dimensions and count of every product.

Manufacturers of refuse sacks guarantee they are fit for purpose and the dimensions and count are accurate

Manufacturers of cotton-based products guarantee the weight, absorbency and, where relevant, the cotton content. They also guarantee the dimensions and count.

Manufacturers of cleaning and hygiene chemicals guarantee the product volume and other required information is as specified on the label and fully supported by relevant test data. In addition, they guarantee the containers and plastic bottles holding the chemical products are recyclable and clearly marked with the relevant recycling symbol.

## Accredited Distributors



**CHSA**  
Accredited  
Distributor  
Certification Mark

Our Accredited Distributors have committed to buy cleaning and hygiene products from a CHSA Accredited Manufacturer or suppliers who make product of equal standard. They also guarantee to uphold our Code of Practice.

## Code of Practice

Our Accreditation Schemes and Code of Practice combine to guarantee every member:

- Trades ethically and sustainably;
- Provides quality, fit for purpose products; and
- Makes sure *what's on the box is what's in the box*.

Every CHSA member has signed our rigorous Code of Practice. It requires them to “conduct their business to a high standard”

The combination of our Code of Practice and Accreditation Scheme membership means every member:

- Trades ethically and sustainably
- Provides quality, fit for purpose products, and
- Makes sure ‘what’s on the box is what’s in the box’.

## Independent Inspection



Our Code of Practice and Accreditation Schemes are underpinned by Independent Inspection. Our auditor, an experienced quality assurance professional, visits every member to ensure compliance. New members 4 times per year

Site visits were challenging last year, but there was no let up. During 2020, the Inspector conducted 146 audits, equaling the number conducted in 2019.

He audited 11,969 product lines in distributors. He checked 1,160 individual cotton-based products for compliance and 472 labels on plastic-based products and 126 other individual products. He checked 740 labels on paper-based products and confirmed the dimensions of 242 paper-based products.

We also launched our Accreditation Scheme for Manufacturers of Cleaning Chemicals in the midst of the pandemic. The Inspector checked all 18 members before granting them formal certification.

In 2020, members across all the Schemes achieved compliance of 93% or more.

**Applications  
soared**

Albany House  
14 Shute End  
Wokingham  
Berks  
RG40 1BJ  
  
0800 243919  
07713 451349



**Application for Membership**

Accreditation Scheme:	Please Indicate
• Plastic sack	
• Soft tissue and Wipes	
• Mop	
• Chemical	
• Distributor	

Applications for membership of the CHSA have soared since the pandemic hit as new businesses pivoted towards selling into this sector.

We know membership is a stamp of approval so we are thorough in our process of accepting new members. We conduct compliance checks on marketing claims and require references from within our Association. Once these due diligence checks are complete our Independent auditor carrier out an audit relevant to the Scheme they are joining. They are only accepted as a member once they have passed the audit.

We can say with complete confidence, no company or organisation gets into the CHSA unless it trades ethically and guarantees "what's on the box is what's in the box".

Our members are amongst the very best in the industry.



**CHSA**  
Cleaning and Hygiene  
Suppliers Association



**CHSA**  
Accredited  
Distributor  
Certification Mark



**CHSA**  
Accredited  
Manufacturer  
Certification Mark

If you want to buy from an ethical business with a respected track record in providing good quality cleaning and hygiene products, look for the CHSA logo and CHSA Accreditation Scheme mark.

Our Standards. Your Guarantee.

**CHSA**  
Cleaning and Hygiene  
Suppliers Association



**Thank you.**