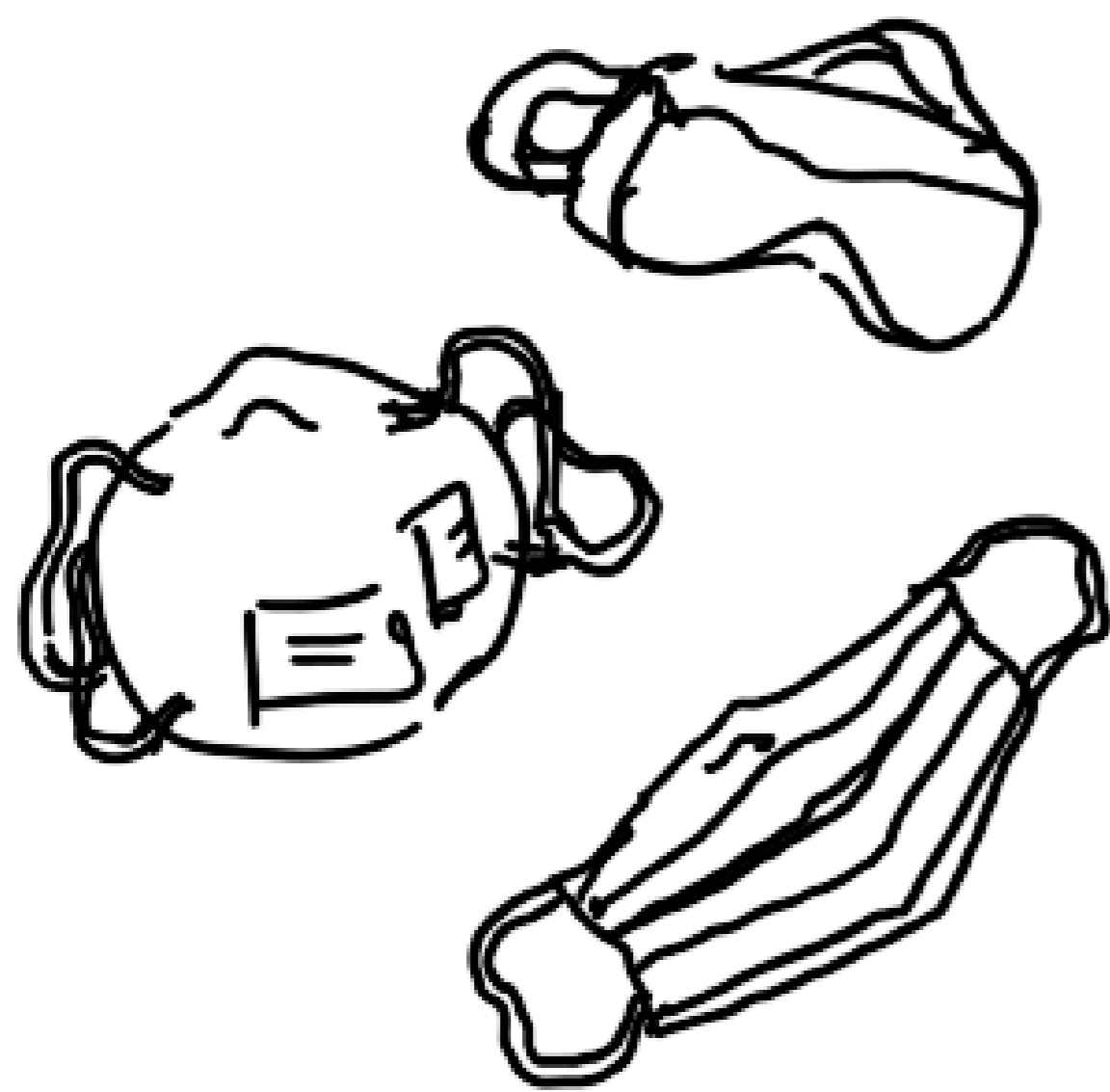


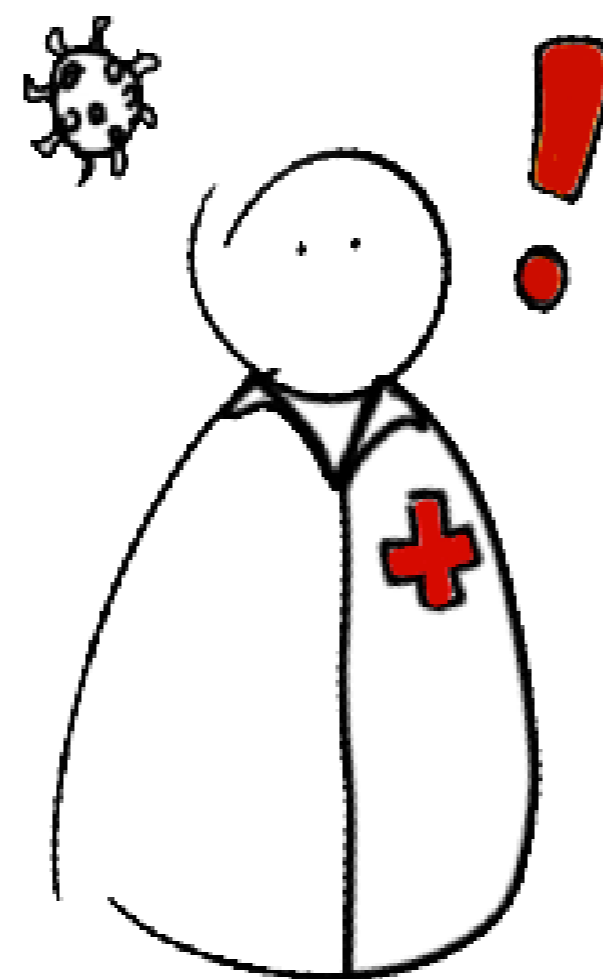
Harnessing volunteer power to protect frontline workers during a pandemic: one charity's story

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Personal protective equipment (PPE) items protect wearers from infection exposure.



Scarce PPE during the UK's first COVID-19 wave^{1,2} put frontline health/care workers at risk of illness and death.

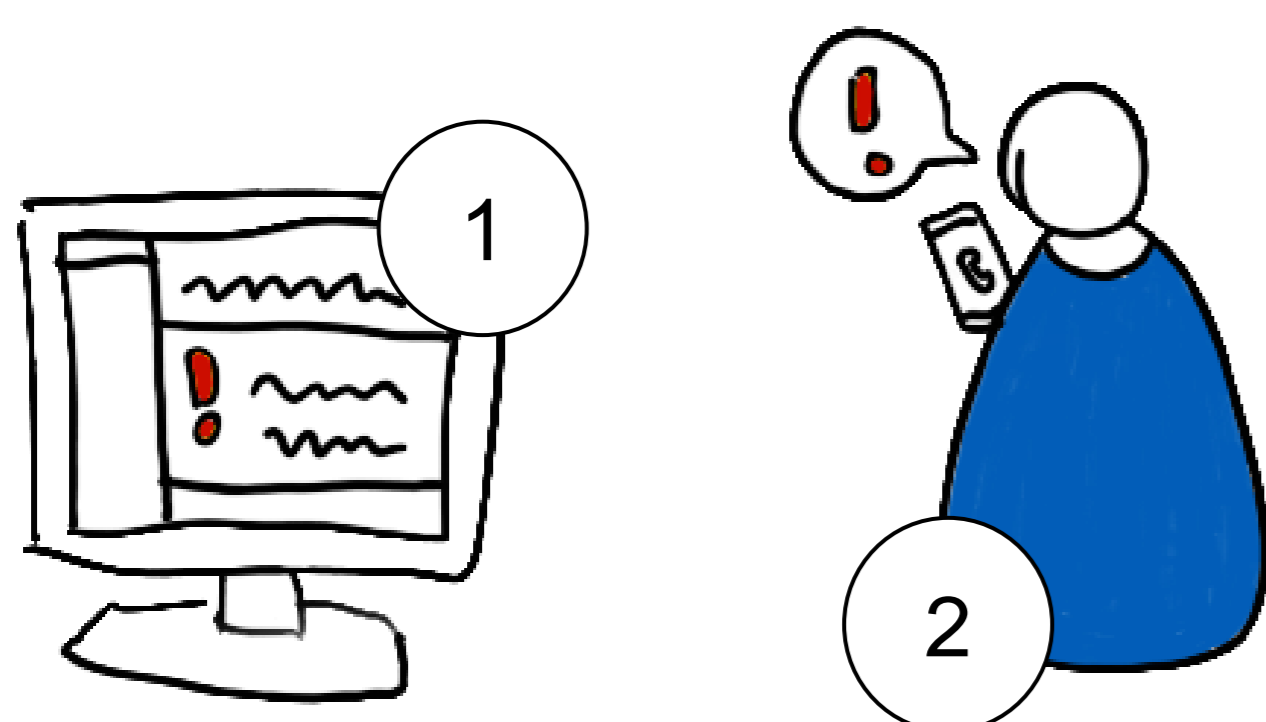


In March 2020, inspired by US medical-student-led action,³ concerned volunteers began to supply PPE to staff in need.



Here's the story of that work, and of what could come next.

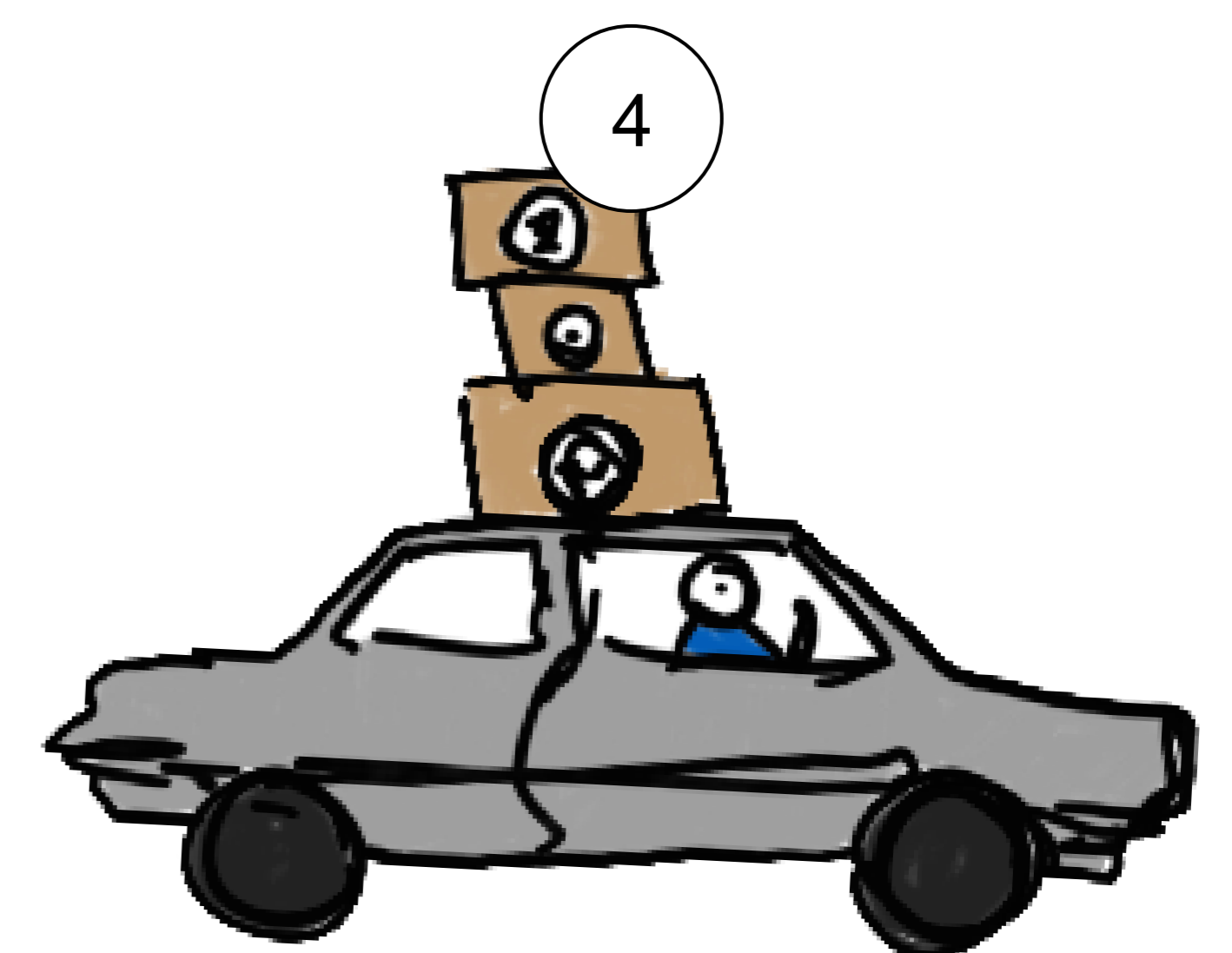
First, staff listed PPE needs online ¹, while volunteers requested unused PPE from dormant businesses ².



Businesses packed their PPE into cardboard boxes ³.



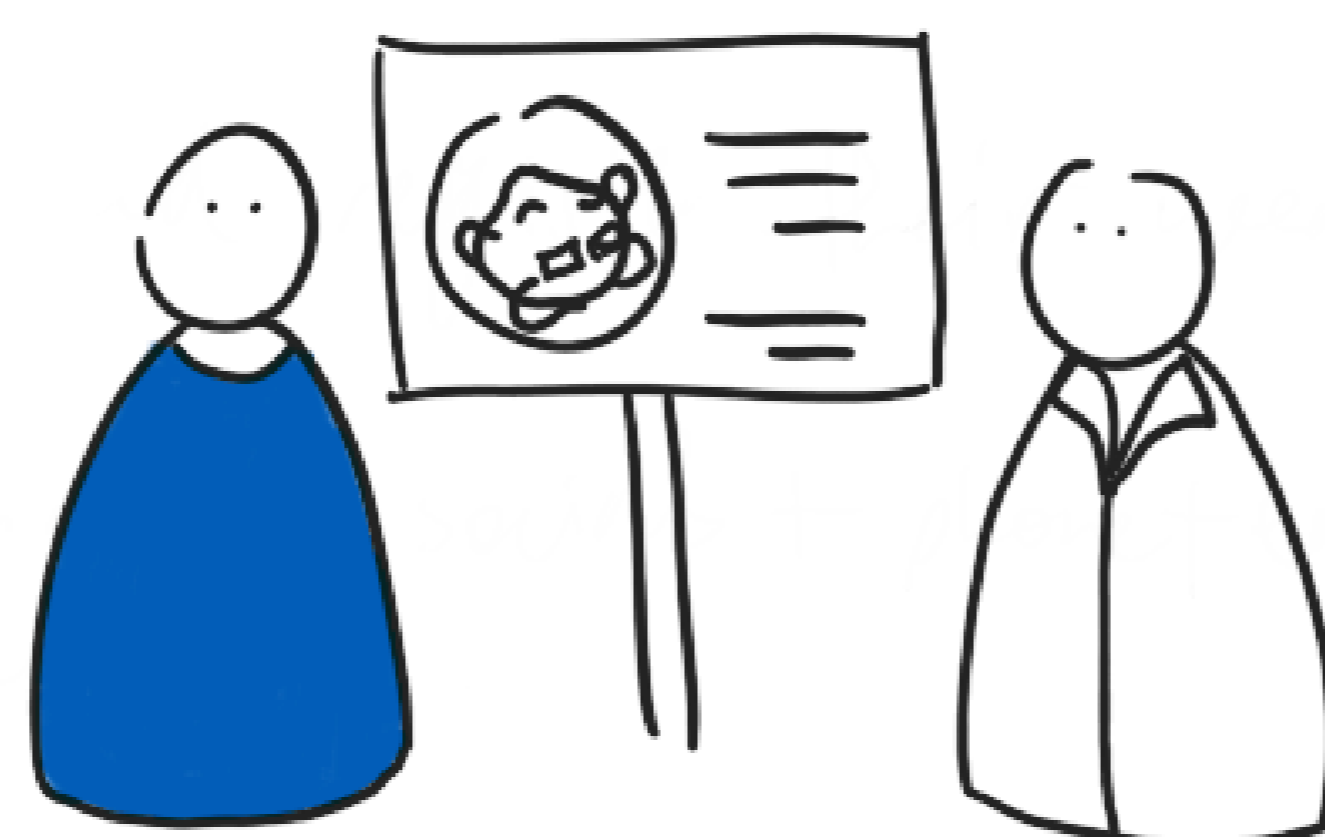
Volunteers then delivered PPE donations to health and care facilities nationwide ⁴.



Within a year, **400+** volunteers had distributed **500K+** PPE items to fulfil **1K+** requests.



As the charity's reach grew, its leadership joined nationwide coalitions to campaign for adequate and effective PPE.⁴



In sum

Voluntary action during major infectious outbreaks can:

- respond to preparedness gaps at the grassroots level,
- facilitate up-skilling and social connection to counter reduced work/study loads and isolation, and
- engender policy change.



Fig. 1: Some of the volunteers, donors, and frontline staff part of our charity's journey.

References

yaning-wu.github.io/files/west-hub-2024-refs.pdf



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