

NHS SBS launches £1.7bn decontamination procurement framework with end-to-end management offer

2 years ago



Finance & accounting, procurement and workforce services provider, [NHS Shared Business Services](#) (NHS SBS), has unveiled a new £1.7bn framework agreement designed to support NHS hospitals and theatres manage sterilisation, decontamination and repair of surgical equipment efficiently, and meet clinical demand.

NHS SBS's procurement framework, [Decontamination Services and Solutions](#) offers end-to-end decontamination solutions. It comes at a time that sees the building and roll-out of surgical hubs being scaled up across the country to increase capacity and ease the pressure on elective surgery.

An estimated [7.2 million](#) people are on NHS waiting lists for operations like hip replacements, cataract surgery or other types of care.

Surgical hubs, specially designed and built for elective care, are being opened up across the country. They are expected to give rise to at least 100 more operating theatres, help deliver [two million extra routine operations](#) and cut waiting lists for surgical treatments over the next three years.

Surgical and clinical teams are reliant on quick efficient turnaround of reprocessed and sterilised instruments to operate and undertake procedures, work through the backlog, and reduce further pressure on clinical services.

As part of this, effective decontamination of surgical instruments and equipment is essential for patient safety and to avoiding delays and inefficiencies in hospital operating theatres.

There are, however, budgetary and staff constraints. To aid infection control, spend is increasing on single-use instruments, in turn increasing recycling and waste costs. To offset this, many trusts are turning to reusable Personal Protective Equipment to support sustainability goals and reduce environmental impact putting pressure on decontamination services.

As NHS trusts constantly evolve and innovate to improve patient care and outcomes, that too comes at a cost. For instance, the increase in robotic surgery provision has created a need for specialist decontamination services to manage the reprocessing of highly delicate instruments.

NHS organisations are also facing a shortage of decontamination staff, resulting in increased training requirements to upskill in-house teams.

Comprising four lots (service types), NHS SBS's framework agreement covers the provision of outsourced decontamination and sterilisation of surgical instruments either on-site or off-site, and involves the cleaning, reprocessing, repair and sterilisation of surgical instruments to support surgery and other activities.

The framework agreement also includes options to procure specialist equipment for the reprocessing of High-Level Disinfection of Probes. Many medical probes are designed to be reusable. Reprocessing allows healthcare facilities to effectively clean and disinfect them, critical to prevention and spread of Infection and maintaining patient safety.

The free to access framework agreement provides a convenient, compliant and cost-effective method of purchasing decontamination services and solutions at pace.

NHS trusts can use it to choose and purchase goods and services from seven carefully selected suppliers, each of whom have undergone a competitive and rigorous selection process to be included on the framework agreement.

Elaine Alsop, Head of Category – Health Procurement Frameworks, commented:

"Infection control has never been so important and with the expansion of surgical hubs being ramped up, decontamination services and solutions are crucial to keeping patients safe.

"Our all-encompassing [Decontamination Services and Solutions](#) framework agreement supports best practice, compliance, drives sustainability and cost-effectiveness. It offers options from complete outsourcing of decontamination services, the ability for extra capacity to be provided either in an emergency or long term to augment a customer's own facilities, and a specialist lot for the decontamination of high-level probes.

"Developed in collaboration with NHS clinical stakeholders, NHS trust procurement teams and leading decontamination solution vendors, it has taken a high-level approach in reviewing the market, capturing service needs and offering NHS trusts the choice to combine multiple service options and offerings to suit their specific decontamination needs, meet challenges and keep patients safe. "

For more information about the [Decontamination Services and Solutions](#) framework agreement, contact the NHS SBS team at: sbs.hello@nhs.net