

Operational Requirements of Suppliers

July 2025

Supply Chain Coordination Limited

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Document Control

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Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Document Owner	The document owner must approve any material changes to the document and is accountable for ensuring that the requirements set out within this document are delivered effectively.
Document Author	The Document Author is responsible for creating this document in line with all operational requirements, current legal and regulatory requirements and maintaining it in accordance with the review cycle and change control requirements.
All Suppliers	All suppliers (including third party contractors and couriers) are responsible for complying with the requirements outlined in this document, for the delivery/ shipment of goods for NHS Supply Chain and its customers.

Purpose of This Guide

NHS Supply Chain and Supplier Collaboration

We value the crucial role suppliers play in delivering excellent service to NHS hospitals and healthcare centres. This guide aims to help suppliers by:

- **Clarifying Requirements:** Outlining inventory and operational needs, such as delivery booking and stock presentation at regional distribution centres.
- **Improving Efficiency:** Promoting supply chain efficiencies and cost savings through beneficial requirements, like better pallet wrapping to reduce delivery refusals.

We believe that top-tier service to our customers is achievable through ongoing cooperation with suppliers. This document is provided to strengthen our partnership and enhance our good relationships with suppliers.

Updates and feedback

- We will periodically update this document to keep suppliers informed of any changes.
- Suppliers can contact their NHS Supply Chain Controller with any comments or queries using standard communication channels.

Screenshots

- Partial screenshots are used in this document to highlight specific areas.
- Some data in this document is from test systems, and any resemblance to real codes is coincidental.

General Principles

Introduction

NHS Supply Chain is dependent on its suppliers to deliver healthcare products, services and food for NHS trusts and healthcare organisations across England and Wales. While we are responsible for ensuring our own systems and IT landscape are secure, our suppliers must be able to demonstrate they are committed to ensuring the security of their systems and the products / services they supply to us.

Cyber security

- We are currently reviewing our approach to managing Cyber Security Risk in the Supply Chain, and the requirements of suppliers will evolve over time.
- As an initial step, we are implementing guidance as per PPN 014 Updates to the Cyber Essential Scheme | Procurement Pathway, whereby suppliers within the scope of the PPN must be compliant with Cyber Essentials Plus.

Post award process

- **Contract Details:** After a Framework Agreement or Contract is awarded, a member of the relevant Category Team will send you the contract details.
- **Inbound Profiles:** We will update our systems and set up inbound profiles based on your demand history, including lead times, item codes, and pallet volumetrics. If no demand history is available, we will input anticipated demand.

Lead times

- You **must** provide lead times when completing the invitation to tender. Any changes to lead times must be reported to your Supply Chain Controller immediately.

Minimum product expiry date

- There **must** be a minimum of 90 days, from receipt of delivery, for **all** products that have a sell by, use by or expiry date - unless the framework agreement stipulates otherwise. This applies to Stocked and eDirect sales.

Back orders

- We don't handle back orders for stock orders. All items ordered must be delivered in full on the specified delivery date. If only part of the order is delivered, the remaining items will be cancelled. You should advise us in advance if items will not be delivered in full using the Supplier Portal - <https://suppliers.supplychain.nhs.uk/SupplierPortal/Account/LogOn>. A new order may be issued for the remaining stock, and the new purchase order number must be included on the delivery note. Stock arriving with a cancelled or closed purchase order may be returned to you.

Disruptions

- If supply is disrupted to the extent that ordered quantities may not be fulfilled, you should inform us at the earliest opportunity and in advance of any unfulfilled volumes.

Section 1 - Cyber Security Requirements

Cyber security compliance - for suppliers that identified they are in scope

Within Part 3A of the Tender Qualification envelope, you were asked:

- Do you collect, process or store patient data?
- Do you collect, process or store personally identifiable information
- Will you provide any IT service, system or device as part of this contract?

Suppliers that answered yes to any of the above questions, in relation to the delivery of the framework agreement, were determined to be 'in scope' as per guidance, and must comply with PPN 014: Cyber Essentials Scheme.

Cyber Essentials Plus is a Government backed scheme to help businesses of any size protect themselves against a range of the most common cyber-attacks and to demonstrate their commitment to cyber security. Through Cyber Essentials Plus, organisations must ensure that effective and proportionate cyber security controls are applied to contracts to mitigate supply chain risks.



What if a supplier does not have Cyber Essentials Plus?

The quickest and most effective means to provide assurance that an organisation meets minimum cyber security requirements is through Cyber Essentials Plus.

However, it is understood that not all organisations may have the certificate or be in a position to obtain it. Where that is the case, PPN 014 sets out how you can demonstrate your commitment to cyber security, and that security controls equivalent to those required through Cyber Essentials are in place, through alternative means.

To achieve this, you need to complete an Information Security Third Party Questionnaire (ISTPQ). This will be required at the Supplier Questionnaire stage of procurement, and any suppliers who fail to provide the information required will not be able to continue through the procurement process.

Annual audit

All suppliers will be audited for annual renewal of Cyber Essentials Plus, as per PPN 014. Where Cyber Essentials Plus is not in place, suppliers will be required to complete and annually review the Information Security Third Party Questionnaire, for review by our Cyber Security Team.

Cyber security incident response

- Ensure our Cyber Security Team have updated contact details for your cyber security team and vice versa.
- Ensure we are made aware of any security breach as soon as is reasonably possible, and no later than 48 hours post event.

Section 2 - Delivery Presentation

- **Standard requirements:** Deliveries must meet specific standards to be received by the inbound Distribution Centre (DC) staff.
- **Supplier responsibility:** Ensure goods are not damaged during transit.
- **Prevent movement:** Use straps or other means to secure goods in the delivery vehicle.

Pallet specification (wood)

We **cannot** make exceptions to the pallet quality/type accepted into our Distribution Centres; therefore, you **must** ensure that products are delivered on 'standard' pallets as advised below:

- The preferred pallet type is Chep (GKN) pallets
- 1,200mm x 1,000mm
- Full perimeter base
- Four-way entry
- No protruding nails
- No loose boards or missing boards
- The pallet must be suitable to support the load
- Damaged or substandard pallets will not be accepted or exchanged under any circumstances

Euro pallets are acceptable at some of our Distribution Centre sites, but **only** if written permission is obtained from us before the delivery takes place.

One for one exchange may be available at the time of delivery. If pallets are not returned with the delivery driver, the supplier must ensure that pallets are collected within 21 days of delivery and **must** have an authorised pallet collection note. We will log all deliveries and collections of pallets. Please note that Chep pallets are accepted on a 'one way' trip only and will not be exchanged.





Pallet specification (packaging)

- **Wrapping:** Use clear stretch/shrink wrap. No loose or protruding wrap. Tape the end down.
- **Banding:** Use plastic or nylon banding. No metal banding.
- **Delivery notes:** Attach to the first pallet unloaded. Must be clearly visible and in a 'documents enclosed' wallet.
- **Product placement:** No overhang over 25 mm. Products must not lean on the pallet.
- **Mixed products:** Label advising mixed pallet must be attached to the stock. Unclear segregation may lead to refusal.
- **Single product:** Do not spread the same product over multiple pallets.
- **Height:** Pallets must not exceed the acceptable height for the Distribution Centre (DC). This is currently 1,500 mm across all sites.
- **Labels:** Attach to the top left corner and the short side (1,000 mm) of the pallet.
 - Individual Labelling: Each pallet with one National Product Code (NPC) must be labelled individually.
 - Label Availability: Labels are available on the Supplier Portal if needed.
 - Placement: Attach at least one label on the short (1,000 mm) side of the pallet.
- **TI HI:** Maintain standard TI HI (cases per layer, layers per pallet). Contact NHS Supply Chain for changes.
- **Weight limit:** Pallet weight must not exceed 1,000 kg.
- **Date codes:** Do not mix sell by and use by dates on one pallet.
- **Stock separation:** Do not mix Rugby National Distribution Centre (NDC) and Regional Distribution Centre (RDC) stock on the same pallet.
- **Carton orientation:** Cartons must be upright with 'this way up' arrows followed. Incorrect stacking may lead to refusal.

Carton outer packaging

- **Presentation:** Cartons must be safely presented, with information easily accessible.
- **Labels:** Attach two case labels centrally, facing outwards. Labels are available on the Supplier Portal if needed.

- **Contents:** Outer cases should contain only one product.
- **Protection:** Cartons must protect goods during transit. Labels must face outwards and not be covered by carrier labels.
- **Regulatory compliance:** Product labelling must meet Health and Safety Executive (HSE) requirements (see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/chemical-classification/labelling-packaging/>). COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) products must have correct labelling and data sheets provided before delivery.

Discrepancy Compliance Database (DCD)

- Where there are **any** discrepancies with the delivery, the Operational Receipts Team will record details on the DCD. This information will then be shared with the Supply Chain Controller who will query the discrepancy with you. Discrepancies may include, but are not limited to:
 - Short delivery (incomplete order)
 - Over delivery (surplus order)
 - Damaged orders (product or pallet)
 - Incorrect stock/ product
 - Insufficient expiry date
 - Early or late deliveries

Section 3 – Stocked Lines

Service requirements

- Stocked products must meet the standards set by the Framework Agreement or specific Contract (where applicable).

Order processing

- Suppliers must accept electronic orders. Minimum order quantities or values are accepted only with prior agreement in writing with the relevant Category Team.
- The initial order after a Framework Agreement or Contract is based on estimated demand. Stock levels and demand forecasts, thereafter, will be adjusted based on actual sales.
- Stock demand will be monitored throughout the contract. Goods not sold within six months may be returned to the supplier as per the Core Call-off Terms and Conditions for Goods and Services.
- Suppliers must inform us of the required storage temperature for their products. Our depots are ambient temperature controlled to manage 15C to 25C temperature label requirements. **However, we are unable to accept products that:**
 - Have tight temperature ranges (eg 20C to 25C or 18C to 23C) where the product quality would be compromised by the temperatures within our distribution centres (eg the product could be stored in 15C temperatures when the minimum allowed for that product is 20C)
 - Need to be stored in temperatures outside of this range (eg 2C to 8C)
- Delivery documents must reflect temperature control requirements.
- To comply with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Scan4Safety programme, all NHS suppliers must trade electronically via the PEPPOL network using an accredited provider.
- We use NetEDI for electronic trading, including sending orders and receiving invoices via PEPPOL. This replaces the need for the Supplier Portal, except for creating Advanced Shipping Notices (ASNs) for Rugby and Gorsey Point.
- For PEPPOL queries, contact CEGEDIM - <https://www.sybycegedim.co.uk/> or via email support.supplychain@cegedim.com OR netixsupport.supplychain@cegidim.com

Order amendments

- If you cannot fulfil an order in full, you **must** notify us of the items that cannot be delivered before the delivery date. This should be done using the Supplier Portal or a chosen third-party provider. You should also inform the Supply Chain Controller. The Supply Chain Controller may cancel and re-order the remaining items, if needed.

Making a delivery booking

As an NHS Supply Chain Stock Supplier, you must follow these steps to assist in efficient operation of our receipt departments:

- All deliveries to Distribution Centres must be booked in advance:
 - Alfreton receiptsalf@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Bridgwater receiptsbrid@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Gorsey Point receiptsgor@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Maidstone receiptsmaid@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Normanton receiptsnorm@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Rugby RDC/NDC receiptsrugby@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Suffolk Park suffolkparkreceipts@supplychain.nhs.uk
- We reserve the right to request the delivery is made to an alternative site if required
- Bookings should be made by email at least 72 hours before the delivery date.
- If any changes to the delivery are required, prior agreement must be obtained with our receipts department.

Fixed booking slots

- Suppliers may be issued with fixed booking slots to regulate demand. The booking process for fixed slots is the same as for ad-hoc bookings.
- Suppliers must notify the Distribution Centres of booking details of stock to be delivered at least 72 hours beforehand, specifying the stock to be delivered.
- If a fixed slot is not required, you must inform the receiving Distribution Centre at least 72 hours in advance.
- If delivering more pallets than reserved, you must make an additional ad-hoc booking for the entire delivery. The Distribution Centre may not be able to accommodate extra pallets within the fixed booking slot.
- Fixed slots are not contractual and can be changed or removed at any time, especially if guidelines are not followed.

Parcel carrier deliveries

- **Booking requirement:** Suppliers using parcel carriers must book deliveries with the Distribution Centre (DC). Deliveries may be refused if not booked.
- **Delivery Advice Note:** Parcel carriers must present a delivery advice note to the goods inwards staff. While we can sign carrier consignment notes or PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants), suppliers' delivery notes must also be signed as proof of delivery. Note that these signatures do not signify acceptance of the goods.
- **Separate signatures:** PDA and consignment notes must not be consolidated for multiple supplier deliveries. Each consignment must have a separate signature.
- **Booking requests:** Suppliers should ideally make booking requests and communicate them to the parcel carrier.
- **Timed slots:** All bookings will be issued a delivery time slot. Deliveries of fewer than five cartons may be scheduled for morning or afternoon slots. Deliveries of more than five cartons must be pre-booked for a specific time slot.
- **Rugby NDC:** All bookings for the Rugby NDC will have a specific time slot, with no morning or afternoon options.

Delivery days/times

- **Delivery hours:** Suppliers must be able to deliver goods to NHS Supply Chain between 10pm Sunday and 10pm Friday, excluding bank/public holidays.
- **Exceptional circumstances:** We may require deliveries on bank/ public holidays and weekends, in exceptional circumstances.
- **Supplier requests:** We will try to accommodate supplier delivery requests, where possible.

Email booking requests

- **Email address:** Please use the individual email address for each site:
 - Alfreton receiptsalf@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Bridgwater receiptsbrid@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Gorsey Point receiptsgor@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Maidstone receiptsmaid@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Normanton receiptsnorm@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Rugby RDC/NDC receiptsrugby@supplychain.nhs.uk
 - Suffolk Park suffolkparkreceipts@supplychain.nhs.uk
- **Booking form:** Use the booking request form for each DC booking. Only one form per booking. Do not include multiple attachments in the email.
- **Email subject:** Include the purchase order number and depot name.
- **Changes:** We may update the booking form details at any time. Suppliers will be notified to adjust their systems/processes.
- **Risk of rejection:** Booking requests may be rejected if required details are missing.
- **Confirmation:** After processing, a confirmation email with date, time, and booking reference will be sent. Quote the booking reference on the delivery advice note and by the driver upon arrival.
- **Booking availability:** DC booking departments: 8.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. NDC booking department: 8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Inbound deliveries: 6am to 2pm.

Gorsey Point, NDC and Rugby RDC bookings via Supplier Portal

1. **Rugby NDC bookings:** Use the Supplier Portal to create an ASN (Advance Shipping Notice) / Truck Number. Bookings require a Truck Number.
2. **ASN process:** Complete via NHS Supply Chain Supplier Portal, then email the relevant receipts team with the booking request form.
3. **Future changes:** The ASN process may be introduced to other distribution centres.
4. **Obtaining truck numbers:** Use the functionality within the Supplier Portal to do this.

Note: Ensure items and quantities match between the ASN process, delivery notes and invoices to avoid discrepancies and payment delays.

Arrival at delivery site

- **Report to security:** Upon arrival, drivers must report to site security or the gatehouse with their delivery advice note and a government ID (eg driving licence).
- **Site rules:** Security will provide site rules and health and safety information, then direct drivers to the waiting or unloading area.
- **Hand over keys:** Drivers must park, hand over their keys to Receipts Operatives, and wait in the designated area. Wheels will be chocked for safety.
- **PPE requirements:** Drivers must wear a high visibility vest and safety shoes. Security may loan a vest if needed.
- **Behaviour:** Abusive behaviour is not tolerated. Drivers should be patient during busy periods.

Late arrival at site

- **On-time arrival:** Drivers must arrive on time. Arrivals over 30 minutes late are considered late.
- **Unexpected delays:** If delayed, drivers must contact the DC Receipts Department with the estimated arrival time.
 - Alfreton +44 1773 724117
 - Bridgwater +44 1278 464012
 - Gorsey Point +44 1928 858568
 - Maidstone +44 1622 402721
 - Normanton +44 1924 328711
 - Rugby RDC +44 1788 512488
 - Rugby NDC +44 1788 512488
 - Suffolk Park +44 1284 355910
- The Receipts Department will check with the Operations Team to see if the late delivery can be accommodated. If the DC can accept the delivery, the driver will be advised to continue but may have to wait for an available slot.
- **Re-booking:** If the DC cannot accommodate the delivery, it must be re-booked. Failure to contact the DC may result in delivery refusal.
- **Parking:** No parking facilities are available on site. Overnight parking or breaks are not allowed. Contact the DC for the nearest HGV lorry park, if required.
- **Early arrival:** Drivers arriving more than 30 minutes early may be refused entry and asked to return at the booking time.

Unloading and Checking Process

- **Unloading:** Receipts team uses manual handling equipment (MHE). Courier drivers can unload parcels onto pallets under supervision.
- **Manual Handling Equipment:** Drivers must have their own MHE; we cannot loan equipment due to Health and Safety reasons.
- **Safety:** Unsafe vehicles or stock may lead to load refusal.
- **Inspection:** Receipts team will inspect goods within three working days, checking items received, quantity, damage, pallet presentation, pallet height, carton weight and for signs of tampering or theft.
- **Rejection:** Goods may be rejected if they don't meet requirements. Delivery notes may show discrepancies but aren't conclusive.

- **Discrepancy Report:** Issued within three working days, detailing non-conformance, or rejection reasons.
- **Unchecked deliveries:** All deliveries are signed as 'unchecked' due to volume.
- **Acceptance despite discrepancies:** Stock may still be accepted if there are no health and safety risks, with suppliers notified and re-work carried out at your cost.

Delivery Advice Notes

- **Required information:** These must include supplier name and address, delivery address, Manufacturer Product Code (MPC), NPC, the quantity ordered and dispatched, purchase order number, item description, date/batch numbers, special handling instructions, sell by/use by dates, and Advanced Shipping Notice (ASN) number.
- **Risk of refusal:** Deliveries may be refused if any required details are missing.
- **Signatures:** We will sign consignment notes and PDAs, but these are not proof of delivery for invoice queries.
- **PDA use:** Hauliers must get a signature for each supplier's goods separately and not consolidate deliveries.

Delivery refusals

- Deliveries may be refused for reasons including:
 - Unsafe pallets or unsuitable vehicle
 - Health and safety concerns
 - Damaged, infested or tampered stock
 - Poorly presented pallets (eg overhanging products, mixed layers)
 - Late or early arrivals (more than 30 minutes)
 - Missing approved advice note
 - Inadequate shelf life
 - Mixed 'use by' dates on one pallet
 - Overweight (exceeding 1,000 kg) or over height pallets
 - Sub-standard or broken pallets
 - Unbooked deliveries
 - Outer cartons with multiple products (without prior agreement)
 - Cartons over 15 kg
 - Driver non-compliance with site rules or abusive behaviour
 - Early arrivals (more than five days before due date)
 - Incorrect pallet/case labelling
 - Ignored 'this way up' arrows
 - Deliveries without ASNs – for Rugby Regional Distribution Centre (RDC) and National Delivery Centre (NDC)
 - Back orders

Returns and collections

- **Reasons for collection:** Rejected goods, sale or return, product recall, order cancellations, over-delivered goods, incorrect goods.
- **Authorisation:** The Supply Chain Controller will get your authorisation for returns.
- **Process:** The Supply Chain Admin Support Team sends return documents to you.

- **Collection:** You arrange a pre-booked collection from the relevant NHS Supply Chain Distribution Centre. Our Admin Support Team confirms the collection date.
- **Paperwork:** The driver must have collection paperwork with a Return to Supplier Authorisation (RTSA) number. Signature obtained as proof of return. Copies of collection notes will be signed and sent to you.

Sale or return (stocked lines)

- **Return request:** We may request returns due to lack of demand, notifying you in writing.
- **Exchange option:** Parties may agree to exchange goods of equal value from the NHS Supply Chain catalogue.
- **Collection:** Supplier arranges collection as per the returns and collections section.

Fast track deliveries

- **Urgent needs:** Fast Track deliveries prevent stockouts. The Supply Chain Controller will contact suppliers for urgent orders.
- **Booking:** You book delivery with the DC, giving at least 24 hours' notice. Only deliver items marked as 'Fast Track' will be received, no other orders should be included on this delivery as it may jeopardise the delivery slot.

Emergency deliveries

- **Urgent customer needs:** We may require emergency deliveries to be made directly to customers, and will advise you of this, as and when required.

Bulk Buys

- **Agreement:** Bulk buys may at times, be required. They will be confirmed with the Category Team, supplier and Supply Chain Team, prior to delivery at an agreed date, location and time.

Direct supply full load containers

- **Incoterms overview:** The Supplier shall deliver the Goods to the RDC in the United Kingdom on a Delivered Duty Paid (DDP) basis, in accordance with Incoterms® 2020.
- **Order placement:** Supply Chain Controller places orders directly or via the supplier's UK office.
- **Purchase Order:** Includes a container summary sheet with estimated docking and delivery dates.

Unsafe loads

- **Responsibility:** If a container is rejected for being unsafe, the supplier must make the load safe and rebook delivery into the Regional Distribution Centre (RDC).
- **Costs:** Suppliers are responsible for any additional costs.

Container loading

- **Purchase Order (PO) per container:** Only one PO per RDC per container unless instructed otherwise.

- **Loading method:** Load consignment per product in a "snake" fashion (front to back, left to right) with labels facing forward.

Container bookings into DC

- **Delivery Duty Paid (DDP):** The supplier or agent books container delivery directly from port to RDC. Use bookings@supplychain.nhs.uk and include the RDC name in the email header. Provide supplier and freight agent contact details.
- **Booking timing:** Book at least two weeks before vessel Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA), with ETA plus three or four days. Distribution Centres are flexible, where possible, with changing ETAs.
- **Late arrivals:** 30-minute window for late arrivals. Contact your delivery centre ASAP if running late to avoid re-booking and additional costs.
- **Photos:** Ensure loads are well-presented with no unloading issues.

Loading safety

- **No plastic sheeting:** Do not place plastic sheeting on the floor.
- **Safe loading:** Ensure cargo does not move or get damaged during transit.
- **Additional restraints:** Advise NHS Supply Chain if additional restraints are used.
- **Fumigation:** Dunnage wood must be fumigated with certificates provided.
- **No metal banding:** Metal banding is not permitted.

Photographs

NHS Supply Chain will require pictures during the loading process of the initial loads after award of contract. Photos of the following should be provided:

Image 1



Image 2



Image 3



- **Required images:**
 - Start of loading
 - Halfway through loading
 - Fully loaded before closing doors and applying the seal (must be provided in every instance)

- **Email details:**

- Quote PO number, factory name, container/seal number, and destination in the email.
- Send images with the container loading plan to the relevant Distribution Centres.

- **Email contacts:**

- Alfreton: receiptsalf@supplychain.nhs.uk
- Bridgwater: receiptsbrid@supplychain.nhs.uk
- Gorsey Point: receiptsgor@supplychain.nhs.uk
- Maidstone: receiptsmaid@supplychain.nhs.uk
- Normanton: receiptsnorm@supplychain.nhs.uk
- Rugby RDC/NDC: receiptsrugby@supplychain.nhs.uk
- Suffolk Park: suffolkparkreceipts@supplychain.nhs.uk

LCL (Less than a Container Load)

- **Terms of award:** Dependent on the terms of award.
- **Different terms:** Book into RDCs as if supply were from the UK.

Section 4 – eDirect

If you're a supplier offering eDirect products to our customers, you must:

- **Sign a Service Agreement**
 - This must be signed by your key contact and the NHS Supply Chain Customer Service Manager.
- **Submit required information**
 - Provide all necessary details **before** the eDirect framework goes live.
- **Meet the standards**
 - As set out in the Framework Agreement and
 - Any specific contract terms, if they apply.

Receiving orders

- We send orders throughout the day as customers place them.
- eDirect order numbers start with an X followed by nine digits (eg X123456789).
- Orders include all the details needed for direct delivery to the customer.

How orders are sent

- Orders are sent electronically via:
 - PEPPOL (Pan-European Public Procurement Online - preferred method)
 - EDI – Electronic Data Interchange
 - Email

No fax or post is used.

- Suppliers can manage orders via:
 - Your PEPPOL provider or
 - The NHS Supply Chain Supplier Portal

Order timing

- Orders can be sent up to 6pm daily.
- We do not support order cut-off times.
- If you have a cut-off time, add an extra day to your delivery lead time.

PEPPOL requirement

- All NHS suppliers must use PEPPOL for electronic trading (as part of the Scan4Safety programme).
- You can use any PEPPOL provider (eg CEGEDIM is a partner, but not mandatory).
- PEPPOL can replace the need to use the Supplier Portal.

Order details must include:

- Requisition number
- Requisition point and address
- Customer's local reference number (if applicable)
- These must appear on delivery paperwork or labels.
- Labels can be your own or downloaded from the Supplier Portal.
- Missing details may result in refused deliveries.

Order management - amendments and cancellations

Suppliers can:

- Reduce quantities at line level
- Cancel orders if they can't meet the delivery date
- Make amendments up until 4pm on the delivery day
- Notify customers as soon as possible about any issues.

Single line orders

If suppliers are unable to fulfil the full quantity:

- Update the delivery date
- Cancel if the delay is over 30 days
- Reduce quantities for items you can't supply
- Complete the rest of the order
- Fill out the proforma document and email it to eDBOLA@supplychain.nhs.uk by 5pm
- We will inform the customer and rekey the order

Order confirmation

- Confirm all orders by 4pm on the delivery day or invoices may not be paid
- Confirm dispatch at the time of shipping
- If delivering early, update the delivery date first
- If you have frequent early deliveries, please contact your Supply Chain Controller to adjust your lead times.

Delivery and labels

- Deliver only to the address on the order
- Labels or paperwork must include:
 1. Requisition number
 2. Local reference number (if any)
 3. Requisition point and address
 4. Purchase order number
- Labels can be downloaded from the Supplier Portal (See Section 3 on accessing and navigating the Supplier Portal), your third party PEPOL provider or you can use your own, ensuring the information in the four points above is included.

If an order is packed into more than one box, a duplicate label must be attached to each outer box. This information is critical to the customer and must be clearly visible on receipt of your goods and should be free from any obstruction eg carrier labels. Avery labels or compatible L7166 (for laser) or K8166 (for inkjet) address labels are required, A4 sheets 99.1mm x 93.1mm labels, six per sheet.

Pricing

- Update pricing in line with:
 - Framework start or extension dates
 - Any specific commercial agreements (eg Call-Off contracts)
 - Coordinate with your category team when updating price files or catalogues

Minimum order values/quantities

- Any minimum order value or minimum order quantities need to be agreed with the relevant category team.

Returns

- Our Customer Services Team will contact you to arrange returns on behalf of the customer in accordance with the Core Call-off Terms and Conditions for Goods and Services. The purchase order number, product and reason for return will be advised along with the customer's collection point. From a return being raised, we require confirmation of the collection date within 48 hours.

Discrepancies

- Our Customer Services Team will notify you on behalf of the customer if goods have not been received. We require proof of delivery quoting the original order number and relevant signature, date and time. Discrepancies will be reported to you within five working days of the expected or actual delivery.

eDirect information required prior to contract launch

- We require the following information prior to launch. The signed Service Agreement and Required Information must be returned by email as soon as possible.
- **Order processing information** - State how orders will be placed. If by email, state the email address orders are to be sent to. If using a third party PEPOL provider, state the contact details of the person responsible for implementing this.
 - **VAT number**
 - **Lead time** - State the lead time for your products. If lead times differ by product, provide this detail and attach a separate Microsoft Excel file detailing the lead time by product code.
 - **Supplier Portal access information required** - Provide details of the people requiring access to the Supplier Portal for order amendment, confirmation and printing labels (Name, Job Title, Address, Post Code, Telephone Number, Email Address).
 - **Customer requisition details** - How the customer requisitions details will be displayed. State if the Supplier Portal generated label will be used. If the details will be displayed on the delivery paperwork, attach and send sample paperwork detailing where this information will be shown.
 - **eDirect returns** - Confirm there will be no carriage charges or handling fees applied for eDirect returns in line with the Framework Agreement and/or Contract, and that all returns will be arranged and credited within 10 days of the return being raised.
 - **Delivery method** - Confirm the courier(s) or method of transport which will be used for this contract.
 - **Minimum order quantities/values** - Detail any minimum order values. Note that we are unable to manage minimum order quantities.

Section 5 – Inbound Logistics Collection

Collection notification: We will inform you if goods will be collected by NHS Supply Chain or a nominated contractor.

Delivery/collection

- **Collection schedule:** Goods collected from your location as per agreed schedule. You must ensure products are ready for collection.
- **Amendments:** Contact Supply Chain Controller and Inbound Logistics Team at least 24 hours in advance to request collection time changes.
- **Loading time:** Collection vehicle must be loaded and dispatched within one hour of arrival. Delays may result in refused collection.
- **No Goods Notice:** Provide 24 hours' notice if there are no goods to collect.
- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for goods not loaded onto the scheduled vehicle. Additional collection can be requested at your expense.
- **Pre-collection contact:** You must contact the appropriate NHS Supply Chain DC or distributor with order number(s) and quantity using the booking request form.
- **Labelling:** Each delivery unit (pallet/case) must be labelled individually according to the colour-coded system provided by NHS Supply Chain
- **Proof of Collection (POC):** You or your distributor need to create a POC for each NHS Supply Chain DC, detailing the number of distribution units. A signed copy of the POC must be given to the collection driver. POC confirms the number of units collected, not proof of delivery.
- **Delivery Advice Note:** Must accompany all collections, signed as 'Proof of Delivery' by NHS Supply Chain. Attach to the lead pallet in a documents enclosed envelope. It should include the:
 - Supplier name and address
 - Delivery address
 - MPC (Supplier Item Code)
 - NPC (NHS Supply Chain Item Code)
 - Quantity ordered and dispatched
 - Purchase order number
 - Item description
 - Date/batch numbers
 - Special handling instructions
 - Sell by/use by dates
 - ASN number
 - Order checking
- **Same day/next day:** For urgent customer requests, we will contact you to arrange a mutually acceptable collection time. You must respond promptly.
- **Pre-advised deliveries:** You must ensure deliveries are pre-advised to NHS Supply Chain DCs.
- **Goods check:** NHS Supply Chain or our agent will check goods, quantities and load condition before leaving the supplier. The driver will sign for loads as 'unexamined' or 'unchecked' if unable to check individual cases. Discrepancies or damages will be notified within three working days.

- **Refusals:** We may refuse loads if:
 - Incorrectly loaded
 - Pallets are poorly presented
 - Loads are unstable
 - Stock is damaged
 - The advice note is missing
 - The product(s) have an insufficient shelf life
- **Driver witness:** The driver must witness loading and check the pallet standard. Requests to decant and restack sub-standard pallets are at our discretion.

Section 6 – Adding New Lines to a Framework Agreement/ Contract

Information required from suppliers

Packaging details:

- Units per case
- Units per layer of pallet
- Units per pallet

Order and delivery:

- Lead time
- Minimum order quantities

Safety and compliance:

- COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) data sheets for hazardous materials
- Product expiry details (if applicable)
- Compliance with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regulations for data sheets, packaging and labelling

Product identification:

- Sell by date visibility
- Batch number visibility
- Lot number visibility
- Serial number visibility
- Bar-code format

Special requirements for medicinal products:

- Notify us if the product is a licensed medicinal product before delivery takes place
- Annotate delivery documentation to show the product is licensed
- Comply with EU GDP (Good Distribution Practice) 2013/C 343/01 and Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) guidelines for transportation
- Provide evidence of compliance upon request

Regulatory compliance:

- Provide relevant data sheets for products covered by CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) or CoSHH regulations before delivery

Failure to provide this information can delay the setup of new lines and their addition to the NHS Supply Chain catalogue. All amendments and/ or additional product lines **must be** submitted to NHS Supply Chain for review and approval.

For more details on regulatory requirements, visit HSE's website at www.hse.gov.uk

Section 7 – Supplier Tools

Supplier development:

- **Commitment:** To help suppliers meet delivery requirements.
- **Guidance:** To advise on booking deliveries, receiving orders and pallet presentation.
- **Performance improvement:** The Logistics team provides delivery performance details and seeks ways to improve. You may be contacted to discuss improvements during the term of the Framework Agreement.

Supplier Portal:

- **24-hour access:** Secure online access for suppliers to get crucial information.
- **Order tracking:** Track orders in real-time, view order details and monitor delivery dates.
- **E-commerce features:**
 - View and amend orders
 - Confirm deliveries (eDirect route)
 - Create ASNs (Rugby Depot and Rugby NDC)
 - Create invoices
- **Reporting:** Identify demand trends and service levels.
- **Support:** Contact your Supply Chain Controller for portal assistance.

This portal helps Suppliers stay informed and proactive in meeting NHS Supply Chain needs.

Why use the Supplier Portal?

Order management:

- **Required:** Use the portal or PEPOL EDI for order changes and delivery confirmations.
- **Payments:** Confirm deliveries and amend orders to avoid payment delays.
- **ASN generation:** Needed for stocked deliveries to book delivery slots.

Secure benefits:

- **Private access:** Securely manage your role in the healthcare supply chain.
- **Privacy:** High security keeps your information safe.

Guidance:

- **Portal guide:** Visit the NHS Supply Chain website for support on how to use the Supplier Portal, including a video user guide at <https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/suppliers/portal/>
- On the same page you can also download Supplier Portal Guidance Notes.

You can log on to the NHS Supply Chain Supplier Portal at:
<https://suppliers.supplychain.nhs.uk/SupplierPortal/Account/LogOn>

Catalogue

Over 400 NHS organisations use the NHS Supply Chain catalogue to browse and order. Adding rich product data (images, documents) helps supplier products stand out, enable clinicians to make informed choices that best meet patient needs, and can increase sales.

Product images

- Suppliers must provide three images per product, to be uploaded to the NHS Supply Chain catalogue
- They must be clear, high-quality, and show:
 - The actual product (not generic)
 - Packaging (with labels)
 - Different angles or components (if a kit)
 - **Image requirements:**
 - Format: **JPEG**
 - Size: **Greater than 1MB**
 - Resolution: **300 x 300 pixels minimum**
 - DPI: **72+**
 - Filename: **NPC code only** (eg MRB270.jpeg, MRB270_1.jpeg)

How to submit:

1. Via URL (preferred): Add links in the NHS Supply Chain 610 form.
2. Via Email: Send JPEGs after NPC code is assigned.

Supporting documents

Suppliers can also upload:

- **Marketing materials**
- **COSHH sheets**
- **Product info sheets** (eg allergen/nutritional info)

Document requirements:

- Format: **PDF**
- Size: **Less than 5MB**
- No hyperlinks or pricing
- Filename: **NPC code only** (eg WPA020.pdf)
- **Food datasheets** must include date (eg ABC123_01.04.2024)

Where to send

- **Email:** images@supplychain.nhs.uk
- **Large batches:** Use URLs or send a memory stick to:
Catalogue Images
c/o Data Management NHS Supply Chain
West Way, Cotes Park Industrial Estate
Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 4QJ

Quick checklist

- Clear, high-quality product images (JPEG)
- Correct filenames (NPC code only)
- Supporting PDFs under 5MB, no links or prices
- Food datasheets dated and named correctly
- Send via email, URL, or memory stick

Section 8 – Finance

Supplier activation/amendments

New suppliers:

- **Form:** Fill out the New Supplier Request form.
- **Contact:** Get the form from your Category Lead or contact Accounts Payable at +44 1773 724000 or plenquiries@supplychain.nhs.uk.
- **Return:** Send the completed form to the Category Lead within three working days.

Current suppliers:

- **Changes:** For bank or address changes, use letterheaded paper with company details and a designated signature.
- **Send to:** Accounts Payable Manager, NHS Supply Chain, West Way, Cotes Park Industrial Estate, Alferton, Derbyshire, DE55 4QJ or email plenquiries@supplychain.nhs.uk

Additional details:

- **Form:** If needed, complete the Supplier Amendment Request form.

Invoicing

Preferred method:

- **PEPPOL network:** Transmit invoices and credits via PEPPOL to avoid payment delays.
- **Setup:** Contact Accounts Payable at +44 1773 724000 or plenquiries@supplychain.nhs.uk.

Alternatives:

- **Email:** Send to purchase.ledger@supplychain.nhs.uk. Accepted formats: PDF, TIF, Excel, Word. Email can include:
 - Single attachment with a single-page invoice
 - Single attachment with multiple single-page invoices
 - Multiple attachments, each a single-page invoice
 - For multipage invoices, send each as a single attachment.
- **Postal:** Send to Accounts Payable, PO Box 253, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 8DL.

For more information, contact Accounts Payable at +44 1773 724000 or plenquiries@supplychain.nhs.uk.

Invoice requirements

Purchase Order:

- Quote NHS Supply Chain purchase order number on all invoices.
- Only one purchase order number per invoice.
- No leading or trailing characters; it must be clearly identifiable.

Unit of issue:

- State invoices in the same unit of issue as the purchase order.

Product code:

- Quote the same Manufacturer's Product Code as on the purchase order.

Substitute items:

- Charge substitute items at the same or lower price than the original.
- Quote the original item's product code on the invoice.

Included items:

- Only include items from the purchase order.

Transmission timing:

- Only transmit invoices at the point of expected receipt of goods

Prompt settlement discount credits:

- Calculations for prompt settlement discount credits should be based on receipt of goods and not despatched date

Supplier:

- Invoices should come from the contracted supplier, unless using a distributor.

Failure to follow these requirements may delay payment or cause invoices to be rejected.

Statements

- **Monthly statements:** Provide monthly statements (preferably in Excel, but paper is accepted) showing outstanding balances.
- **Postal copies:** Send to NHS Supply Chain Accounts Payable, West Way, Cotes Park Industrial Estate, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 4QJ.
- **Excel versions:** Please submit to your designated account handler.

Payments

- **Terms:** Payments made in line with the terms in the Framework Agreement or Contract.
- **Queries:** Contact Accounts Payable at +44 1773 724000 or plenquiries@supplychain.nhs.uk.
- **Remittances:** Submitted via email on the payment day.

Invoice discrepancies

- **Reporting:** Discrepancies reported by email at individual line level.
- **Proof of delivery:** Send to podrequests@supplychain.nhs.uk.
- **Delivery disputes:** Please contact your dedicated accounts payable account handler
- **Credit notes:** Send to purchase.ledger@supplychain.nhs.uk.
- **Credit note disputes:** Email plenquiries@supplychain.nhs.uk.

Credit notes

- **Disputes:** Email plenquiries@supplychain.nhs.uk or contact your dedicated account handler.
- **Details:** Must quote the original purchase order number and invoice number.
- **Rebate credits:** Must follow HMRC UK VAT legislation for contingent discounts.

Proof of delivery

- Must be provided within nine working days of the request
- Proof of delivery for Stock orders must include all items delivered, quote a valid NHS Supply Chain purchase order number, and a valid NHS Supply Chain signature or printed name
- Proof of delivery for eDirect orders must include all items delivered, quote a valid NHS Supply Chain purchase order numbers, and a valid customer signature or printed name
- Proof of collection paperwork will be required where suppliers use the NHS Supply Chain inbound logistics solution
- We will not accept carrier paperwork with name only
- Proof of delivery or collection notes should be emailed to podrequests@supplychain.nhs.uk
- Email submissions must have the Unique Document Reference (UDR) as quoted on the UDR request email

Returns to suppliers

- **Notification:** We will inform you of our intention to return goods.
- **Response time:** If no dispute or credit note is received within 30 days, the deduction will be automatically applied to your account.
- Disputes should be emailed to CAT>Returns@supplychain.nhs.uk

Returns credits

- plenquiries@supplychain.nhs.uk
- **Send credit notes:** Use these methods:
 - **PEPPOL:** Transmit via PEPPOL.
 - **Email:** Send to purchase.ledger@supplychain.nhs.uk.
 - **Post:** Send to PO Box 253, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 8DL.

Include these details:

- Debit Note Reference
- Purchase Order Number
- Returns Number
- Return to Supplier Advice Number
- Returns and Discrepancy Advice Number

Charges:

- Re-stocking or collection charges need prior agreement.