1. **Background**

   a. Procurement best practice accepts that there is a requirement to ensure that all products used within the NHSGG&C meet the desired standards of being fit for the purpose intended whilst also representing best value for Money.

   b. As part of the specification and selection processes for each product, NHSGGC must ensure that products are purchased that minimise the potential risk of infection, e.g. products that are easily cleaned. This requirement is detailed within the NHSGG&C Procurement Strategy, and is enforced within the Procurement Tendering Process by inclusion of specific questions on Decontamination and Infection Control being incorporated within the Standard Invitation to Tender Document and Pre Qualification Questionnaire completed by potential suppliers prior to a purchasing decision being made in respect of the procurement of equipment.

   c. To augment the above actions, the development of an Infection Control Product Selection Policy Document is viewed as an essential step to ensure that all future purchasing activities recognises both the importance of maintaining strict infection control standards, and ensuring that all potential infection control risks are recognised and minimised within the cycle of Procurement activity prior to purchase.

2. **Current Procurement Activity**

   A. **Contracted Items – National Procurement**

   a. NHSGG&C are mandated to ensure that they strictly comply with all commercial contracts that have been negotiated on a National, Regional or Local basis by the national Procurement Organisation.

   b. The award of contract for any product follows a rigorous process which involves the involvement of Commodity Advisory Panels whose main role is to provide specialist information and knowledge to the selection process.

   c. Each Commodity Advisory Panel has the presence and involvement of a professional infection control advisory representative who has the responsibility of advising the selection procedure of any potential infection control risks associated with any product being reviewed.

   d. It is therefore assumed that products positively assessed by the Commodity Advisory Panels and have contracts awarded have been fully vetted against all criteria including infection control issues and require no further input by local infection control teams.

   e. Any product on National Procurement Contract introduced into general use and subsequently identified as an infection control risk will be formally notified to the Commodity Advisory Panel for action.
B. NHSGG&C Contract Activity / Formulary Control

a. The Commodities Team of NHSGG&C’s Procurement Services undertake contracting activity at a local level to reflect the needs of the Health Board on products not covered by National Contract arrangements.

b. The model used to govern the National Contracting Arrangement (Para 2A a-e) is adopted locally and wherever products are being selected for use within NHSGG&C, Infection Control are invited to act in an advisory capacity.

c. The selection of new medical/surgical products within NHSGG&C is also undertaken within the Dressings and Sundries Formulary Committee.

d. To ensure that all products selected by this process are also subject to Infection Control risk assessment the presence of an Infection Control Representative is mandated on the Dressings & Sundries Formulary Committee.

C. Ad Hoc Purchases

a. A large percentage of products required by NHSGG&C are covered either by a contract at National, Regional, or Local level, or controlled with the strict formulary process. The involvement of Infection Control within the selection process will ensure that all products governed by the contract arrangements are positively vetted for infection control risks.

b. There are however a wide range of ad hoc purchases that occur for products that are not the subject of any contract. The main reason for the products not being on formal contract is that they tend to be either very low value products with inconsistent usage patterns, or are more specialised one off purchases. Many products in these categories will be the subject of sporadic purchasing patterns and will not reoccur during any financial year.

c. It is recognised that Infection Control would be unable to advise on every ad hoc purchase due to the volumes of transactions involved, and the time delay in positively vetting an item prior to purchase could present operational difficulties if the product was not purchased in time.

d. Any product which has been previously purchased and or is routinely used will therefore be exempt from the vetting process if it has been previously approved by infection control.

e. It is further recognised that many products will not be used in a clinical setting and pose a reduced risk in relation to infection control e.g. Office Products, Books, Print Items. It is therefore recommended that items that will not be used in a clinical setting are also exempt from the vetting process.

f. A system of exception reporting will be set up involving Infection Control to review and monitor potential risks associated with products in use. (see points d, and e, above)

g. Therefore only products which are not covered by contract or formulary control, and are being purchased for the first time for use in a clinical setting be referred prior to purchase to Infection Control, unless in unplanned emergency situation where the product will be subject to the exception reporting procedure as detailed in Para 2A point f.
3. **Register of Risks – Infection Control**

a. A register will be maintained jointly between Infection Control and Procurement Services to detail products that have been identified as a potential Infection Control risk.

b. Products identified as presenting an infection control risk will be added to the register.

c. The register will contain details of the product, supplier, the reason for inclusion in the register, and wherever possible the details of a suitable alternative product.

d. Products failing the vetting procedure at National, Local, Formulary or ad hoc level would be added to the register.

e. Any product in general use within NHSGG&C found to present a risk would also be included within the register.

f. The register would be available to all Purchasing Officers to ensure that no items on the register would subsequently be ordered.

4. **Flow Chart – Procurement Services - Product Selection & Infection Control**

a. The attached flowchart has been drawn up to detail the steps to be taken to ensure Infection Control risks are minimised, whilst ensuring that the involvement of Infection Control officers is maximised.

The main steps in the process are:-

- Product Requested
- Is it on Register of Known Risks? – If Yes Reject
- Is it on National Contract? – If Yes Proceed to Purchase
- Is item on Formulary Control – If Yes Proceed to Purchase
- Is item routinely purchased or widely used? – If Yes Proceed to Purchase
- Will Item be used in Clinical Setting – If No Proceed to Purchase
- If Yes Refer to Infection Control
- If Approved by Infection Control – Proceed to Purchase
- If Rejected by Infection Control – Add to Register of Known Risks.
PRODUCT SERVICES
PRODUCT SELECTION
INFECTION CONTROL FLOWCHART

Is the item on the Register of known infection Control Risks?
- NO: Return to Dept & Advise Contact/Advice from Infection Control
- YES: Proceed to Purchase

Is the item included within an NP Contract?
- NO: Proceed to Purchase
- YES: Proceed to Purchase

Is it a local contract in NHSGG Formulary control?
- NO: Proceed to Purchase
- YES: Proceed to Purchase

Has the product been purchased previously and/or in current use?
- NO: Proceed to Purchase
- YES: Proceed to Purchase

Will the item be used primarily in a clinical setting?
- NO: Refer to infection control for approval or rejection
- YES: Proceed to Purchase

Product in Use identified as a potential infection control risk

Add to Register of known Infection Control Risks

Review by Infection Control

Emergency Loop by Exception

Approved

Rejected

Refer to infection control for approval or rejection