

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How do we ensure that we order the correct type of product for our needs?

A. Many of the products on the Healthcare Furniture framework can be tailored to your requirements, getting the specification right at the start is key to a successful implementation. We are able to provide you with a statement of requirement (SOR) for the product you are looking to purchase, this will help you build a specification. Evaluation days are also important as it allows the trust team to see and feel the product and feedback on what they like and don't like.

Q. My colleagues have requested furniture from a high street retailer, are we able to purchase from this source?

A. There is no legal requirement to purchase through the NHS Supply Chain framework, but these purchases would be considered 'off contract'. As an NHS trust, you would need to satisfy your local standing financial instructions. Under Public Procurement regulations, this may need to be tendered or you would need to request a quotation. By utilising the NHS Supply Chain framework, you don't need to go to tender. You will need to ensure you obtain relevant certification as to which EU or British standards the product is tested to. Seek guidance from your fire officer if you need further information on this.

Q. Does the framework allow you to direct order without having to get quotations or do a mini competition.

A. Yes it does, as the framework is a fully compliant process then the tendering requirements have already been met and you can order single items directly, provided the conditions of direct award are met.

Q. We have ordered the wrong product, can we return the item?

A. In most cases, furniture is made to order and so this makes returning the product difficult. In the first instance, check to see if any other department within your trust can use the product. If you need further assistance, contact your customer service advisor quoting your order number to raise a return queries with the supplier.

Q. We want to standardise but don't know where to start?

A. Contact the team, we can meet you and walk through what things to think about when looking to standardise. We can also build you a project plan and help you through every stage of the project.

Q. If I need a product urgently how quickly can you get the quote?

A. We have an SLA of five working days for suppliers to respond to quotes but if you let us know upfront how quickly you need a turnaround we will try to work to your timeline, however requesting a short lead time may risk not getting quotes from all supplier. The average delivery for products will depend on the product specification and can be between 5 days or 6 weeks as most products are made to order.

Q. Do suppliers offer warranties on this framework?

A. Products are covered by a 5 year warranty for product performance. This does not cover wear and tear or user damage.

Q. What is the difference between a sofa and a settee?

A. The name, otherwise they are the same item.

Q. Is Bariatric furniture available on this framework and where should I look for it?

A. Bariatric furniture is available via the NHS Supply Chain framework. For more information on the bariatric range available, please email our team at HScapitalquotes@supplychain.nhs.uk. Please include a brief explanation of the furniture you are looking to source, and we can identify the appropriate suppliers to meet your requirements.

Q. Can we run mini competitions and if so, what help can I get to do this?

A. Yes you can run mini competitions. Talk to your CRM who can put you in touch with the category team at NHS Supply Chain: Hotel Services. We can help you manage a mini competition.

Q. What makes this medical healthcare furniture and how is it different from normal household furniture?

A. In the main, medical healthcare furniture is made with extra strength and cleanliness in the design. They tend to be constructed with cleaning in mind from wipe-clean materials or covered with vinyl and waterproof materials allowing the items to be cleaned regularly with cleaning solutions.

Q. What is the general lifespan of a piece of furniture?

A. This depends on how much use the furniture will get in its designated location, but we would expect healthcare furniture supplied through the framework to last for 5 to 7 years with routine use.

Q. How do I get repairs, maintenance or servicing for the furniture?

A. Maintenance terms can be agreed with suppliers at time of purchase, repairs or servicing can be arranged at point of sale or agreed with in house trust maintenance teams.

Q. Can I get specific furniture designed for challenging environments?

A. As most products are bespoke at time of order, any modifications can be discussed with the suppliers to try to meet your specific needs. These are not 'off the shelf' items so we have more flexibility with suppliers when specifying requirements.

Q. What considerations have been made to the furniture framework to assist with sustainability targets?

A. Suppliers on the framework must meet FSC certification (Forest Stewardship Council) to ensure all materials used are responsibly sourced. We also abide by the parameters of the NHS Supply Chain drive for ethical and sustainable sourcing and the rules on labour laws around modern day slavery. Suppliers also offer a repair, re-use and recycle option on their products.

