

Proposing Manufacturer Commissioned Homecare Services: Guidance for Companies V5 (August 2026)



Manufacturer Commissioned Homecare Process Overview

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1. Introduction

The NHS is accountable for the homecare services provided to NHS patients.

There is a national service management process for manufacturer-commissioned homecare in NHS Scotland. This includes a review process for proposed new manufacturer-commissioned homecare services or amendments to existing manufacturer-commissioned service arrangements, monitoring performance metrics and working jointly with providers at national level on the continual improvement of service delivery.

This document provides background information including setting out the process for the proposal, review, implementation and on-going management of new or amended manufacturer-commissioned homecare services.

2. Governance and Management Group

The NHS Scotland Medicines Homecare National Governance and Management Group (MHNGMG) leads the once for Scotland review of medicines homecare service proposals. This includes:

- Acting as a single point of contact for manufacturers and homecare providers to help ensure that any manufacturer-commissioned homecare services meet the needs of NHS Scotland.
- Undertaking a 'Once for Scotland' review of proposed new manufacturer-commissioned homecare services or proposed amendments to existing manufacturer-commissioned service arrangements and advising Boards on their acceptability for implementation in NHS Scotland.
- Leading NHS Scotland level engagement with providers on the continual improvement of service delivery including the review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Supporting Health Boards with the implementation of changes in service arrangements, for example helping to co-ordinate changes in the homecare providers that a manufacturer has commissioned.

The group consists of a representative from each Health Board in Scotland.

Advice from clinicians in the area relevant to the service will be sought as appropriate.

The Secretariat for the group is provided by National Procurement. The contact email address for communication with the group is nss.pchc@nhs.scot.

NHS Scotland is represented on the National Homecare Medicines Committee (NHMC) and seeks to work jointly with regional homecare leads elsewhere in the UK to minimise

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duplication of effort and ensure consistency of approach across the home countries, where possible.

3. Proposing a New or Amended Service

NHS Scotland seeks to work in partnership with manufacturers to ensure that the dispensing route for medicines best meets the needs of the NHS and patients.

Where a homecare service is required, the strong preference of NHS Scotland is for homecare services to be commissioned by the NHS; this approach is optimal from a governance and sustainability perspective and helps to ensure that services best meet the needs of NHS Scotland. Where this is not feasible, manufacturer-commissioned arrangements will be considered.

Manufacturers wishing to propose a new manufacturer-commissioned service or to make an amendment to an existing homecare service are encouraged to engage with NHS Scotland as early as possible (in parallel to the NHMC) and before entering into commercial agreements with providers (contact nss.pchc@nhs.scot).

To propose a new manufacturer commissioned service or an amendment to an established service, manufacturers should complete or update an existing NHMC Homecare Service Proposal (HSP) Form. This form collects background information on the product, a summary of the proposed service level offered and the commissioning arrangements in place. The form will be shared with the MHNGMG; for new medicines, the review group members may not be aware of the product so providing background information, including for example, provision of a draft SmPC where MHRA approval is pending is important to support an informed discussion including the identification of any risks that need to be considered in making that particular medicine available to patients via homecare.

Once the HSP form is received, the National Procurement medicines homecare team will carry out an initial review of the proposal including seeking further clarification where necessary. If there are changes identified that could improve the acceptability of the proposed service to NHS Scotland, these will be proposed to the manufacturer in advance of review by the wider NHS Scotland MHNGMG.

As part of the review process, companies are asked to confirm that they have agreed to comply with the NHMC [Good Practice Principles](#) for manufacturer-commissioned homecare which include offering a choice of provider and a minimum of six months' notice of any changes to a service or the withdrawal of funding from one or more providers. Agreement with these principles supports demonstrating a commitment to work collaboratively to provide a high-quality service and experience to NHS patients.

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Following review by the MHNGMG, feedback will be provided to the manufacturer. The decision will be communicated as follows: 'no significant reservations' or 'not fully appropriate'. Detailed comments will also be provided.

There have been examples of manufacturers entering into contract with providers for a new service or amending service arrangements before confirming demand for the service in Scotland - and then finding that the service was not required. It takes several months for a service proposal to be reviewed. Early engagement is strongly encouraged.

If there are indications of demand for the proposed service from Scottish Boards, the next step is for the homecare provider(s) to propose the service governance.

4. NHS Scotland Homecare SLA

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) is a governance tool that can be used by Health Boards and homecare providers to define roles and agree minimum standards for the provision of services.

There is a standard national NHS Scotland Service Level Agreement (SLA) for manufacturer-commissioned homecare for use between Health Boards and homecare providers. This defines roles and minimum standards for the provision of services. National Procurement enters into SLAs with providers on behalf of all Scottish Health Boards, where requested by the MHNGMG.

Each provider has a single SLA with NHS Scotland covering all Health Boards and all manufacturer-commissioned services rather than holding individual SLAs with each Health Board or for each service. The NHS Scotland SLA is structured in three sections:

- A. Main body of the document which includes general provisions (the clauses);
- B. A generic service specification (the schedule);
- C. Short product specific appendices as an annex to the Schedule; one appendix per product-specific service which details any requirements that are different or in addition to requirements set out in the clauses or the schedule. As a guide this is typically no more than 2 pages per service.

There is provision in the clauses that in the event of any conflict in the requirements set out in the Clauses, Schedule and Appendices; the requirement in the product-specific appendices shall prevail.

Where a provider sub-contracts nursing support provided as part of the Service, only one SLA is required; the provider is responsible for ensuring that their sub-contractor meets the standards set out in the SLA.

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Some manufacturers have chosen to separately commission nursing elements of the service from a nursing provider and a medicines homecare service from a homecare provider but present this as a single integrated service to the patient. NHS Scotland has concerns about this commissioning approach; there is a need for clarity on roles and responsibilities of the respective providers and to ensure arrangements are in place between the providers to manage risks and ensure appropriate information governance. Where a manufacturer has commissioned a nursing service separately to the homecare service, separate SLAs would be required, one with the nursing provider and one with the medicines homecare provider.

5. SLA and Service Documentation Review

Where there is expected to be demand for a manufacturer-commissioned homecare service, the MHNGMG will review the proposed national SLA Appendix for the service to ensure it meets the needs of Boards including identifying any points that could be a barrier to Boards entering into the SLA. The patient registration form will be reviewed to ensure it is consistent with the NHMC standard. Any patient-facing information materials (developed by the provider or the manufacturer) needs to be reviewed. Prescription forms are also shared with the MHNGMG but are not currently formally reviewed at national level.

To request review, providers should complete the Product Specific Service Governance Form (previously known as Form B). Where a manufacturer has commissioned multiple providers, then where possible, all provider proposals will be considered at the same meeting. The form should be sent to nss.pchc@nhs.scot.

The National Procurement medicines homecare team carry out the initial review of the proposal ensuring alignment with the Homecare service proposal form including seeking further clarification as necessary. If there are changes identified that could improve the acceptability of the proposed SLA appendix to NHS Scotland, these will be proposed to the provider in advance of review by the wider MHNGMG.

Following review, feedback will be provided to the provider. The decision will be communicated as follows: 'no significant reservations' or 'not fully appropriate'. Detailed comments will also be provided.

Where changes are required to the appendix or other service documentation, the reviewer will work with the provider and manufacturer if necessary; re-submitting to the MHNGMG if required.

There is not a fixed timescale for review, however it can be 6-12 weeks. This will depend on the number of services under review, capacity of the review group and the time to resolve any issues identified during the review process.

6. Implementation of a new Service

Where the MHNGMG have agreed the addition of a proposed product-specific appendix to a provider SLA or agreed an amendment to a product-specific SLA, National Procurement will send a formal request to the provider to vary the SLA. Once National Procurement and the provider have agreed to add the service-specific appendix to the SLA, National Procurement will share with Board homecare leads:

- Information on the service and supporting materials e.g. the Service-Specific Appendix, registration form, template prescription form etc.
- Share any guidance from the MHNGMG e.g. concerns identified for consideration in Board risk assessments before implementing the service.
- The provider contact details for service implementation

Each Health Board will individually consider whether they want to make use of the service including undertaking their own risk assessment. If they wish to progress implementation, the Health Board will contact the provider directly to undertake implementation planning (e.g. agreeing the registration form and prescription form templates, discussing detailed process issues etc.). To support provider capacity planning, Boards are encouraged to alert providers at the earliest opportunity if they have demand for a service.

Implementation of a new service from initial review of HSP form to sharing the Service-specific appendix with Health Boards can take up to 6 months. This timescale is dependent on the timings of MHNGMG meetings, the number of schemes in the review process and efficient communication between National Procurement, the Manufacturer and Homecare provider to ensure the MHNGMG has sufficient information for decision making.

7. Apps and Other Digital Solutions

Where a service involves use of an app by patients or a health care professional, additional Information Governance (IG) checks may be required including undertaking a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) on the IT solution. These checks can take considerable time. If use of an app specific to a service is being proposed, National Procurement should be alerted as early as possible so that consideration can be given to whether a separate Information Governance assessment is required.

8. Ongoing Service Management

The MHNGMG organises national service management meetings with individual providers at least twice per year, covering all manufacturer-commissioned services; more frequent meetings may be requested, for example if there are significant service issues arising. The meetings will include representatives from the MHNGMG and may include clinical representatives from relevant service areas.

The meetings will review KPIs and other feedback on the operation of services and is an opportunity for joint working between NHS Scotland and providers on the continual improvement of service delivery.

9. Support

For support, please contact the National Procurement medicines homecare team (nss.pchc@nhs.scot).