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4 March 2026

Dear Dr Alexander

RE: SCCL-FOI-2025/26-152

Thank you for your FOI request received by the FOI office for the following information. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and SCCL are able to provide a response in blue below:

1. How does NHS Supply Chain manage the risk of sourcing products/items mainly or exclusively from a single supplier?
Unless there is a requirement for a unique product, NHS Supply Chain does not tend to sole source.
Occasionally, a tender will only produce one response for a product, so market constraints may result in sole source; in this case NHS Supply Chain will review the market and seek new entrants.
NHS trusts can also procure through local routes; NHS Supply Chain can only comment on suppliers and supply arrangements through its frameworks.
Where the procurement of a product from a sole source is unavoidable, we would conduct enhanced due diligence on sole source suppliers which could include:
 - Business Continuity Management assurances
 - Tailored selection criteria
 - Contingency planning in the event that the sole supplier is unable to supply.
2. Is there a policy or guidance on how such risk is managed, and if so please disclose it.
There is no formal policy in existence however our own risk management processes include:
 - We monitor global events to identify potential supply disruptions early. This ensures we act on a timely basis when we become aware of potential issues.
 - We've developed a segmentation tool that assesses the clinical impact of products. The resulting vulnerability score enables us to focus resources proactively on products where resilience issues could have the largest impact; for example, by increasing stock of those products, especially where previous resilience issues have been experienced.
 - We undertake advanced supply chain mapping activity to provide detailed visibility of supply chains beyond our Tier 1 suppliers.
 - All suppliers are assessed and monitored on the grounds of their Economic and Financial Stading by default. Where a supplier is identified as being at high risk of financial failure, we will review our dependency on that supplier (which would include the availability of alternative supply). Any instances involving products/items

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mainly or exclusively from a single supplier would require a written mitigation plan to protect continuity of supply.

- If necessary, we can implement demand management controls to ensure limited products in temporary high demand are prioritised appropriately.

3. Can NHS Supply Chain presently identify how many products/ items are currently mainly or exclusively sourced from single suppliers? If so, please disclose which products/items these are, and which the respective suppliers are, preferably in the form of an Excel spreadsheet if this is possible within FOIA cost limits.

Under Section 1(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, a public authority must confirm whether it holds the information requested and, if it does, communicate that information to the requester. In this case, while we are aware that some products are supplied on a sole source basis, and individual category teams monitor and manage the supply resilience of these items, SCCL does not currently hold a centralised register of sole sourced products.

To produce the information you have requested, SCCL would need to extract individual data from various sources, and compile it into a new summary. The ICO's published guidance makes clear that FOIA does not require public authorities to create new information, records or datasets in order to respond to a request, and a public authority is only obliged to provide information that it already holds at the time of the request. Accordingly, the specific information you have requested is not held within the meaning of Section 1 FOIA.

4. Is there any financial consideration(s) to sourcing products/ items mainly or exclusively from single suppliers? If so, please advise what these are.

All suppliers are assessed and monitored on the grounds of their Economic and Financial Staging by default. Where a supplier is identified as being at high risk of financial failure, we will review our dependency on that supplier (which would include the availability of alternative supply). Any instances involving products/items mainly or exclusively from a single supplier would require a written mitigation plan to protect continuity of supply. This evaluation process is in line with the requirements as laid out by Public Procurement Law and Cabinet Office approved.

5. Does NHS Supply Chain receive any directives from NHS England or the Department of Health on the suppliers that it should contract with? If so, please advise how such directives may be applied and whether this is governed by any particular policy/policies. Please disclose any relevant policies.

No.

We hope that this response addresses your request. However, if you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to the postal or e-mail addresses above, quoting the reference number above. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the handling of your information request will be reassessed by a member of SCCL staff who was not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you will have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

If you require any further information do not hesitate to contact the FOI team.

Yours sincerely

FOI Team

Supply Chain Coordination Limited, a company registered in England and Wales
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Management Function of NHS Supply Chain**

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