

Position Statement: Enteral Feeding Service for Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB).

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| Next Review: | July 2028 |
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| Change History: | n/a |

Position Statement – Enteral Feeding Service for Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Background

In January 2025, BOB ICB and Frimley ICB, in collaboration with the below listed Trusts, awarded a new enteral feeding contract to the supplier Nutricia who are an already established NHS supply partner.

- Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
- Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

For patients, this has meant switching from the Abbott Nutrition enteral feeding service to Nutricia.

Public sector organisations, including BOB ICB and Frimley ICB are legally required to comply with procurement regulations when purchasing goods, works, or services, including enteral feeding services. These regulations, such as the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) and the Procurement Act 2023, are designed to ensure fairness, transparency, and value for money in public spending, as well as making sure we are providing the best possible care for patients while making the most of NHS resources. In order to achieve this, a **competitive procurement process** for this service was undertaken by the ICBs, following which a new contract was awarded to the supplier Nutricia.

The contracts were awarded to Nutricia as the process showed this company offered the best quality service. The ICBs have been working with Nutricia during a contract changeover period, with the contract now live as of 1st June 2025.

This change is part of our commitment to:

- Spend NHS money wisely and fairly
- Make decisions that benefit the local population
- Be open and fair with all providers, ensuring compliance with procurement regulations
- Ensure high standards and good value for patients

Continued review of our suppliers also helps us adapt to changing needs and continue delivering safe, effective care.

What Is a Competitive NHS Procurement Process?

As per the information above, when the NHS needs to buy goods or services it is legally required to follow procurement regulations, which may consist of following a **competitive procurement process**, depending on the service requirement and potential providers in the market.

This means that an opportunity for suppliers or companies to **submit tender responses** is opened, and the NHS chooses the best supplier based on criteria including quality, safety, value for money, and reliability.

The procurement process involves:

1. Identifying a Need

The NHS identifies a need—such as current enteral feed contract is coming to an end, a new contract needs to be procured.

2. Inviting Suppliers to Apply

A public notice is issued so that suppliers can express their interest. This ensures fairness and transparency.

3. Submitting Tender Responses

Interested suppliers submit proposals explaining how they will meet the ICBs' needs, how much it will cost, and how they will ensure quality and reliability.

4. Evaluating Responses

A team of experts representing different areas of expertise carefully reviewed each bid using clear criteria—such as safety, effectiveness, service quality, cost, and compliance with NHS standards.

5. Choosing the Best Option

The supplier that offers the **best overall value** (not necessarily the lowest price) is awarded the contract.

Why You Cannot Stay with the Previous Enteral Feed Supplier

We understand that changes to your enteral feed provider can feel unsettling, and we want to reassure you that this decision has been made carefully, in line with public sector procurement regulations, NHS rules and to benefit all patients.

The NHS follows a **strict and fair procurement process** when choosing suppliers. This means that when a contract is due to come to an end and a competitive procurement process is carried out, different providers have the opportunity to apply for the new contract. The supplier who offers the **best combination of quality and value** is awarded the new contract.

As a new contract is now in place, the old contract is no longer valid and the ICBs are **legally required** to work with the chosen supplier.

For these reasons, **we are not able to continue using the previous supplier**, even if you were happy with their service. However, we are confident that following a period of transition, the new supplier will provide the high-quality care you expect.

We Value Your Feedback – Here's How to Share It

Your experience matters to us. As we transition to Nutricia, we're committed to making the process as smooth and safe as possible for all our patients. Your feedback plays an important role in helping us improve and ensure the highest standards of care.

If you have any thoughts—positive or negative—about your experience with the change to date, we encourage you to share them with us. Feedback helps us understand what’s working well and where we can do better.

You can provide feedback in the following ways:

- **If you live in Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board area:**

Email us at: bobicb.palscomplaints@nhs.net

Call us on: Tel: 0118 982 2720

- **If you live in Frimley Integrated Care Board area (including Berkshire East):**

Email us at: scwcsu.palscomplaints@nhs.net

Call us on: 0300 561 0250

All feedback is reviewed, and where appropriate, shared with the supplier to help improve services.

If you’re unhappy with any aspect of the new supplier's service, you also have the right to make a formal complaint.

To make a complaint, you can:

- **Contact the supplier directly** via email nutriciahomeward.bob.frimley@nutricia.com or call 01225 751 098
- **Raise concerns with the relevant ICB** using the contact details stated above.

We take all complaints seriously and work with the supplier to resolve issues promptly and fairly.