

## What is Decontamination

Decontamination is a general term used to describe the removal of microbial contamination to make an item safe to handle and reuse

The decontamination process is a combination of cleaning, disinfection and sterilisation

## The Role of the Decontamination Unit

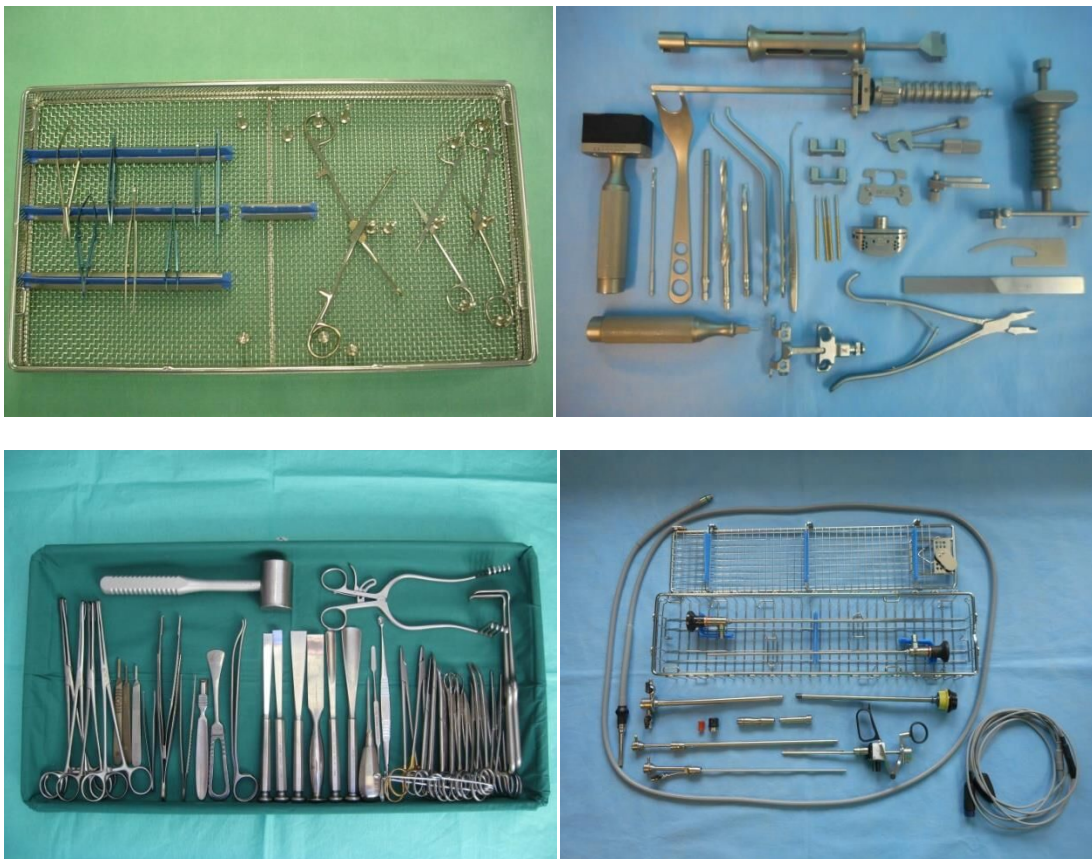
The NHS Highland decontamination unit is located at Raigmore Hospital, Inverness. This is a unique service and it's likely that unless you work for the NHS then you never heard of us before

We are responsible for providing a comprehensive reprocessing service for the decontamination of reusable medical devices for theatres, wards and clinics covering a range of specialities that include Orthopaedics, General Surgery, ENT, Ophthalmic, Gynaecology and Urology

The management, supervisory and technical personnel make up the team who operate the unit. Good communication and relationships along with extensive staff training helps develop our team who are committed to providing a safe and efficient service to consistently meet our customer needs

## Reusable Medical Devices

Reusable Medical Devices is the term for the 'tools' our surgeons will use during an operation as well as other medical professionals during more routine procedures and examinations. These medical devices are varied and often complex in their design and construction. Some are very fine and delicate if used in eye surgery and others much more robust if used for orthopaedic surgery, examples of devices for varying specialities:



## The Decontamination Unit

The unit is divided into three physically separated stages for the different stages of the combined process:

**Washroom** - is a dedicated and controlled area used for receiving and checking the returned medical devices and then preparing them for cleaning and disinfection in the automated washer disinfectant machines



**Cleanroom** - is a dedicated and controlled area for the inspecting, function testing, assembling and packaging the cleaned and disinfected medical devices



**Steriliser room** - is a dedicated and controlled area used for the sterilising all of the packaged medical devices that have passed the previous stages of the process in large sterilising machines



### **Our staff**

We have an in-house training programme that uses a show and tell method of training along with supporting documents and photos for ongoing reference. The training programme takes a full year to complete during which our new recruits are fully mentored and supported by colleagues and our supervisory team

Our training allows our staff to become multi skilled so they can handle medical devices for all specialities in every work area of the unit. There are approximately 20,000 different devices in our system and approximately 2 million devices handled in our service each year

### **Hours of work**

We normally run a rotating shift system to help staff plan their home lives as much as possible but all staff are expected to work the hours to suit the needs of the service so short notice changes are rare but may be expected. This is a critical feature of working in the unit to allow us to support all our clinical staff and colleagues for treating their patients. Premium rates of pay are available for overtime hours worked and any unsocial hours incurred during your shift rotation

### **Current Vacancies**

As a result of the NHS Highland National Treatment Centre that is due to open in September 2022 we are recruiting additional staff to help with processing the additional activity generated by this development, vacancies are:

- 12 x Technicians
- 4 x Senior supervisors