Royal College
of Nursing

CPSN
Clinical
Procurement
Specialist
Network

NHS
NHS Supply Chain

Traffic light support system
User guide

> " Everyone knows about the financial pressures on the NHS. This is an opportunity for nursing staff to help identify savings as well as find the products that are best and safest for patients.
>
> It's nursing staff who are using clinical products on a daily basis. They're in a unique position to identify what works best for patients which products are safest and where savings can be made. "
>
> Janet Davies, Director of Nursing and Service Delivery
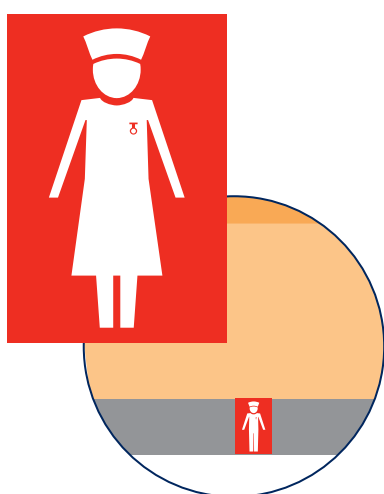> Royal College of Nursing

small changes, **big differences**

How it works

Use the stickers in your main stockrooms and any additional storage areas, to label the shelves the products sit on, or on the permanent box they are stored in.
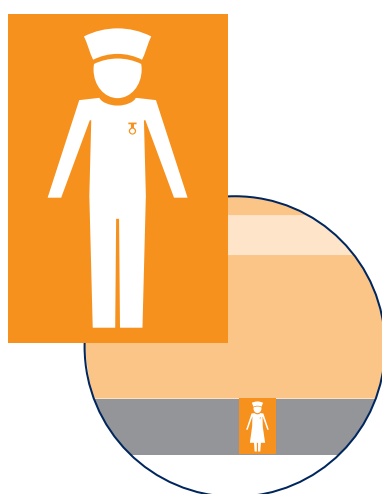
Think

Please use this high cost item with care.

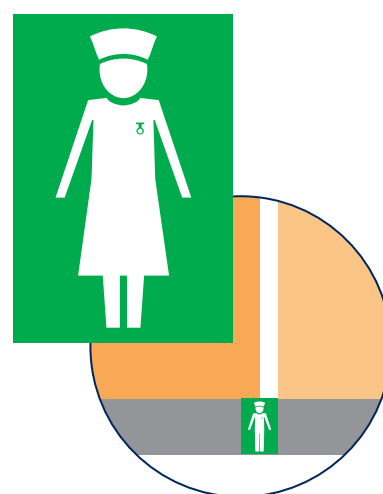Could a less expensive product do the same job?

Use the **red** nurse on the higher priced product option

Consider

Could you still use a less expensive item?

Use the **amber** nurse on the middle priced product option (if there is one)

Go

Good choice, this will help you make savings

Use the **green** nurse on the lowest priced product option

The type of products your traffic light support system could include

- Small, multiple, consumable easy-to-use products that are used for similar purposes.

- Products available from multiple suppliers may cause challenges due to the regular changes in supplier and may not be suitable for the system.

- Not all products within clinical areas may be suitable. A small, easy-to-use selection of products may be preferable here to aid manageability and effectiveness.

Examples of products and the type of considerations the system should encourage - for illustration purposes only.

- **Dressings** - could you use a less expensive item to do the same job?

- **Blunt filter needle** - are you drawing up from a glass ampoule? If not use a blunt fill.

- **Syringe** - do you need a luer lock?

- **Surgical tapes** - if it's not for a specialist patient care use can you use the lower cost tape?

Why should you and your trust support the traffic light support system?

It will help you to take control and make a difference, supporting you to:

- Deliver patient care whilst also driving efficiencies and value.

- Identify lower cost alternatives, that are still fit for purpose.

- Develop an increased awareness and knowledge of the cost of products you use, giving your teams the skills and information needed to help you treat items with the correct level of care, buy better and save.

- Grow a shared knowledge across your teams and the trust.

- Continue to focus on patient care - it's a simple change that won't take any of your time away.

What could the savings mean to you and your trust?

- Every £10 saved could equate to an online PREP 10 credit module.

- Every £30,000 saved could equate to a band 5 nurse.

- Every £40,000 could equate to developing the career pathway for a band 6 nurse.

- That your department makes the savings it needs.

- That your trust makes the savings it needs.

Getting started

1 ——————————————————————— **2**

Assess

- **Think!** Who needs to be involved in developing and launching your traffic light support system?
  Agree your support team. e.g. Head Of Procurement (HoP), Materials Management, Chief Nurse, Infection Prevention and Control, Director of Services Surgery/Medicine etc (nurse), Selected Area Nurse Leads etc.

- **Visit your HoP** - it is essential procurement are fully engaged from the outset.

- **Materials Management / Procurement Lead** - ask your HoP to arrange a meeting with Materials Management. Securing a lead to help you identify which areas are most suitable for the system is crucial.

- **Identify your selection criteria and agree which products, stockrooms and additional storage areas are suitable:**
  - The system is for use with existing working stock
  - Run your Trust Reports (TRs) to see exactly what products you are using across the trust
  - Look for opportunities where more than one product could be used for same/similar procedure i.e. differing suppliers, differing sizes etc
  - Look for high value items that should always be handled with care.

- **Agree timescales.**

- **Agree how you will measure the success of the system.**

Consider

- **Applying a consistent set of criteria against all products** - this will make it easier to understand and measure the success of the total system.

- **Piloting the system over a handful of clinical areas** - this can help you identify which products and areas work best for your trust, before a wider roll-out.

- **Keep the number of products you are applying the system to, manageable** - depending on the size of the store room/department, to prevent 'blindness' and non-compliance.

- **Trust Report (TRs) are a useful tool** - talking to clinical staff in the area alongside the Materials Management team is essential to ensure the project is real and works for all clinical teams involved.

- **Always share information** - across your support team and with all relevant departments to agree and ensure one compliant approach to the project.

Launch

- **Place the stickers on the shelves and permanent product storage boxes.**

- **Let everyone know what you're doing** - encourage senior members and support teams to cascade information to all, use the posters and make the user guides easily available in stock rooms and racking systems in clinical areas etc.

- **Brief your teams** – make clear why you are undertaking this project, encouraging and empowering your teams to make choices which can contribute to patient safety, support the frontline and deliver savings whilst still retaining clinical choice.

- **Share the potential benefits of the system and the specific objectives for your trust** - e.g. standardised products on the shelf that are easier for clinical staff to find supporting improved patient safety, with time and money saved.

- **Make clear why working together is so important** - everyone has a valuable part to play to ensure the success of the system.

Consider

- **Materials Management support** - can they support you to ensure the lower priced green and amber products are located next to the red products in your stockroom for ease-of-selection?

- **Not putting stickers on disposable items** - as this would mean new stickers would constantly need reapplying, adding workload for your Materials Management Team.

- **Display posters and user guides** - so they are never too far away from any stickers. Even in smaller storage areas multiple posters and user guides may need to be used to ensure they are visible in these busy environments.

- **Briefing teams about the system** - avoid extra work and build briefings into the regular catch-ups you have already.

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Keeping the project alive

- **Raise awareness** - keep the awareness posters in your stockrooms and relevant communal areas, provide regular updates at team meetings.
- **Trust support team contact** - ensure a support team contact name is written on the posters to ensure you can answer and support your teams with any questions they may have.
- **Keep the project moving at pace** - keep in touch with your teams and agree from the outset how you will share project updates e.g. send monthly emails to leads in chosen areas to see how it is progressing, ask if they need further material support, encourage them to have catch-ups with their teams to find out how they are getting on and if they have any new ideas they may have for how the traffic light support system could be used.

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Evaluate

- **Measure** - continually check back against your agreed key milestones and success criteria.
- **Share results** - with your teams and wider trust on a regular basis.
- **Lessons learned** - ensure you and your teams continually share key learnings and take any relevant action needed, making sure your system continues to evolve and support the specific needs of your trust.

"

In order to deliver on-going efficiencies in the purchase and use of clinical supplies and further support the reduction in levels of potential risk of harm to patients, working collaboratively with your relevant clinical nursing teams is essential.

For progress to be made and importantly sustained for those involved, ensuring they see the value of the task ahead and fully understand the 'why', 'what', 'how' and 'when', is critical.

"

David Barwell, Head of Procurement
The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

Infection Prevention and Control support

Whilst the stickers are wipeable and can easily be removed, it is important you work with your Infection Prevention and Control teams, as they can help you implement the system ensuring it meets all your Infection Prevention and Control requirements. For example: 1) not applying new stickers on top of old stickers and making sure where you place the sticker is prepped and clear of residue; 2) not applying stickers in areas where there is a high chance of the build-up of dirt.

Case study

Developing the traffic light support system with Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (PAT)

- **Learn how PAT formed their traffic light support system project team** - ensuring they had the right cross functional support from the beginning.

- **Find out how they identified across which sites to pilot the system** - from the largest storeroom in Accident and Emergency to the smallest in surgery.

- **See how they identified an acceptable selection of clinical supplies** - to pilot the system with.

- **See how they helped develop the system** - to ensure it met their requirements.

- **See the results** - how the teams have benefited from the traffic light support system.

Left to right: **Natalie O'Mahony,** Assistant Operations Manager, PAT; **Karen Hudson,** Clinical Nurse Advisor, NHS Supply Chain; **Shelley Scothorne,** Clinical Communications Executive, NHS Supply Chain; **Sue Buckley,** Sister, PAT; **Sheila Smith,** Senior Supplies Assistant, PAT

View the full case study: **www.supplychain.nhs.uk/trafficlights**

" I now have an awareness of the cost of some clinical supplies I use due to the **traffic light support system** and will use alternative clinical supplies where possible, as long as it is the right decision for the patient.'
"

Healthcare Assistant,
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

" Key is that the **traffic light support system** has the potential to help nursing teams drive efficiencies in a way that can be easily adopted into their already incredibly busy days, so that most importantly, they can continue to fully focus on patient care.
"

Natalie O'Mahony, Assistant Operations Manager
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

Every pound saved could
be a pound towards
front line services and
help the trust meet its
savings targets.

Small Changes, can
make big differences.

Order your FREE traffic light support system starter pack,
download the user guide and case study.
www.supplychain.nhs.uk/trafficlights

Learn more about the campaign and see how you can get involved:
www.rcn.org.uk/smallchanges

Any questions or for more information on the different ways NHS Supply Chain can support your
trust to drive efficiencies, save and support the frontline, contact your Trust Procurement.

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