

NHS Supply Chain manages the sourcing, delivery and supply of healthcare products, services and food for NHS trusts and healthcare organisations across England and Wales.

Managing more than 4.5 million orders a year, across 94,000 order points and 15,000 locations, NHS Supply Chain is making it easier for your trust to procure safely and easily, reducing the local burden and freeing up your staff time for frontline care.

At NHS Supply Chain we really value clinical input, that is why clinicians are involved across the whole of the procurement process.

Assurance, Quality, Safety and Innovation

The Clinical and Product Assurance team (CaPA) sits within NHS Supply Chain and was established as part of the new operating model in 2018. The team works closely with the clinical experts that are embedded within our Category Tower Service Providers, and together we ensure that all the products supplied are safe and reflect the needs and preferences of our NHS partners.

NHS Supply Chain's Clinical Nurse Advisors are the clinical interface between organisational clinicians and procurement teams. Their primary focus is customer and patient need. Finding appropriate products is easy as our clinical teams work alongside your procurement team and engage your clinicians to find the right product at the right price for example supporting table top product evaluations.

Assurance

Clinicians work with us to get product specifications and selection right for patients and end users. Working in collaboration with our Category Tower Service Providers, all new products are clinically assured as fit for purpose, safe and meeting end user needs.

The CaPA Framework ensures that our procurement is underpinned by evidence and expert input from a wide range of stakeholders, from patients and users to national clinical expert bodies such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT). By 2022 100% of the products we sell will be fully assured in line with our Assurance Framework.

We are in the process of developing essential specifications which will ensure all products meet the human factors and usability measures agreed with health and care professionals. Clinicians will be an integral part of the Expert Reference Groups and Device Working Groups developing these specifications.

Quality and Safety

As part of the NHS family we are prioritising safety by raising standards and effective partnership working at national and local level. This includes the development of a safety charter, as well as partnership agreements with key organisations such as NHS England/Improvement, Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and the Health and Safety Executive.

Our Safety Intervention process (SIREN) provides rapid response to any clinical product concerns raised by NHS health and care professionals, patients or our regulatory partners.

Our unique national remit means we add value by rapidly cascading important safety information to over 250 Trusts simultaneously, where required. We work with regulators on the resolution of issues and drive product improvements where concerns arise.

We are committed to maximising our engagement with health and care professionals as well as maximising our own clinical expertise within the NHS Supply Chain to the advantage of patient and user safety. To support this we work with the NHS as part of our Lead Reference Trust (LRT) programme. Working directly with our Category Tower Service Providers, LRTs help us develop procurement strategies which will ultimately provide the right products for the NHS.

Innovation

NHS Supply Chain collaborates with health system partners on important national programmes such as;

- National Woundcare Strategy Programme
- Excellence in Continence Care
- NHS Patient Safety Strategy.

Working with national partners we are also enabling innovation and identifying new and innovative technologies, that are a potential benefit to patients and the NHS. We do this by working to understand and meet NHSEI priorities, collaborating with HealthTech Connect, Academic Health Science Networks, the Accelerated Access Collaboration, NHSX and other partners to ensure we can facilitate and plan the smooth introduction of safe, necessary and value for money innovation.

Contact details

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