

## Key Messages National Customer Board June 2022

### Key points

- 1.0 Andrew New took the opportunity to introduce the NHS Supply Chain Executive Team who had joined the meeting as a one off, each person provided a brief introduction. Discussion was had on how vital it is for all members of the executive team to hear and understand customer pain points and work collectively to deliver improvements.
- 2.0 Discussion was had on Elective Recovery, reducing two year waits and then moving on to other challenges around increasing activity. It was suggested that the next couple of years will be focused on outpatients, with a need to move patients around virtually. Feedback was given that insight like this is incredibly useful in supporting NHS Supply Chain's planning to ensure they are equipped for the right scenarios.
- 3.0 Feedback was provided from each of the regions, key points included:
  - 3.1 Resilience continues to be an issue in the region, communications need to be effective at all levels, national, regional, and local. Resilience issues are detracting from some of the forward looking strategic and collaborative work. The system needs to be more mature on how risk is reviewed and managed across organisations. Activity in this area needs to move away from firefighting to look at what the response is to ensure it is set up to address going forwards.
  - 3.2 Workforce continues to be an issue within trusts and wider. Recruitment is an issue, there should be a collaborative approach across the system on this.
  - 3.3 Ways of working were discussed off the back of the National Procurement Forum.
  - 3.4 Inflationary pressures remain a concern, procurement teams are working though the forecasted impact with finance colleagues.
- 4.0 Chris Holmes provided an update on the work of the Resilience Working Group, noting that there is a sense now that we are all in this together. There has been progress this year, however there is a long way to go. Key points included:
  - 4.1 The group is formed of a subset of members from each of the regional customer boards, focused on resilience and pricing. This is a challenging and collaborative working environment, which is transparent therefore driving the right type of discussions leading to improvements in communications. Work is still needed on improving informal feedback loops.
  - 4.2 Suspensions and demand management – a product is only suspended when the supplier cannot supply the product. Pre-covid there would have been around 400 suspended lines in a week, there are currently 1800, this has come down over the past year and at peak during covid was around 5000. The current figure is quite static in terms of its trends. Work is being done on suspensions and alternatives and will continue to improve transparency, in an efficient and timely way.
  - 4.3 Demand management – there are currently 260 products within control or protect stages, this will fluctuate. Demand Management is in place to ensure that product is available for delivery to trusts, it is an intervention to try and avoid suspension. The allocation is dynamic therefore it is difficult to provide threshold information, however this is being worked on.
  - 4.4 Service reporting – work is being done with Oxford and UCLH on 'the lived experience' this is the difference between NHS Supply Chain's reported service level and what a trust feels. An extensive data mining exercise has taken place, the findings are being worked through, initial areas are catalogues being out of date or orders being placed against requisition points which are not operational.
  - 4.5 Members of the resilience working group who have supported strategic supplier discussions were recognised for their contribution, this has worked well as a process. There is a good line of sight on cost pressures which is being shared, noting this is not always the final position.
- 5.0 Discussion was had on reporting, there is a sense on the ground that a lot of work is being done, but improvements have not been felt, there needs to be a way of reporting which demonstrates the current situation, a dashboard is being developed containing information relating to service levels, demand management and suspensions.



- 6.0 There is a move to UKCA regulations, away from MDR, this will lead to suppliers delisting several products. NHS Supply Chain will be working through this impact with suppliers and trust partners to reduce disruption.
- 7.0 Jodi Chapman facilitated a discussion around the proposed changes to the Customer Board. There was overall support for the changes with some final wordsmithing of titles required, offers of support were made for shaping the Clinical Reference Forum. The suggested working groups were all agreed.

