



Carolyn Lawton, procurement manager (top); Sue Mason, senior clinical advisor (bottom), both at NHS Shared Business Services

Improving wound care services with a just in time total purchase system

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framework agreement not only have access to these three fully approved delivery providers, but also to the NHS SBS advanced wound care framework which contains a wide choice of dressings, bandages and scar/burns products. Each product on the framework has been clinically approved by a dedicated clinical stakeholder group, enabling clinicians to feel secure in their formulary choice.

wound (Posnett and Franks, 2008). Wounds impose a substantial economic health burden on the NHS, equivalent to that of obesity, and the figures are set to increase due to the ageing population and the number of surgeries (Guest et al, 2017). Despite this, district nurse numbers in the community setting are declining year on year (Queen’s Nursing Institute [QNI], 2019), where the majority of wound care management is practised.

Under the total purchase system, wound care products are ordered via an off-script online portal. The framework agreement allows for supplier engagement and direct award, so it is entirely up to the user to decide which portal and delivery provider to award. Once a formulary is uploaded to the portal, clinicians can order products safe in the knowledge that they will be delivered within 48–72 hours. As a result, formulary compliance is increased and stock holding at bases can be managed with a minimum and maximum process. The system also reduces product wastage caused by short expiry dates and addresses the sustainability agenda as one box of dressings can be used for several patients rather than just one. It also provides a more timely method of obtaining wound care items, as neither the clinician nor the patient has to wait for a prescription. It also enables the clinician to be truly autonomous in their practice, as they are able to choose which dressings they can have on their formulary because the framework is not limiting in terms of product choice.

Now more than ever, the NHS is searching for ways to reduce wastage and achieve efficiency savings while at the same time improving patient outcomes. One area which can sometimes be overlooked when it comes to innovation and new ways of working is wound care.

The NHS spends approximately £5.3 billion on wound care per year, accounting for around 5% of the overall NHS budget (Guest et al, 2015). At least 2.2 million wounds are treated in the UK on an annual basis with at least 200,000 patients having a chronic

It is widely accepted that 85% of wound care costs are related to nursing costs and home visits rather than the dressing itself (SDMA, 2015). With this in mind, NHS Shared Business Services (NHS SBS) manages a framework agreement focused around helping the NHS reduce the nursing time required to manage wound care in the community by providing a wide choice of high quality dressings to clinicians via a just in time delivery model.

Each supplier on the framework agreement (Convatec, Paul Hartmann and North West Ostomy Supplies) has undergone a rigorous evaluation process focusing on quality and cost. Users of the

One of the benefits of the total purchase system is that it allows medicines management and tissue viability leads to obtain more control and visibility over their wound care spend by utilising the reporting tools which are embedded within the online ordering portals. The live data reports can be used to highlight high areas of spend and help budget holders to make informed decisions when trying to achieve further cost savings. The online ordering platform providers also offer free-of-charge audits to help show users where they can gain further efficiency savings if desired.

Due to the evidenced cost and efficiency savings which can be achieved by adopting a just in time total purchase system under the NHS SBS framework agreement, uptake of the framework has increased significantly since its launch in in 2017. A large number of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and community healthcare trusts are now contracting with one of the three delivery providers under the framework and have the following things to say:

The service was able to reduce wound care costs through the reduction of avoidable waste that is inherent in the FP10 supply system. This also released nursing capacity previously spent 'chasing' prescriptions - the released capacity for the service was one hour per day, per qualified nurse. Patients also expressed a benefit in their houses not being over stocked and the correct dressing and treatment being more efficient.

Treacy Kelly, matron of community nursing, Newcastle Hospitals Community Health Trust on behalf of Newcastle Gateshead CCG

The support provided by NWOS has facilitated the provision of a just in time, responsive and efficient system that ensures maximal Formulary compliance, greater visibility and robust governance in the supply and use of wound care products. NWOS are a trusted and reliable partner and the timeliness of their supply

is fundamental to minimising avoidable waste that is inherent in other supply arrangements.

Neil Frankland, NECS Medicines Optimisation Pharmacist, working with North Tyneside CCG

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We have worked collaboratively with SBS with this project and their support has been invaluable. Sue Mason heads up the wound care side of things at SBS and is a great resource to tap into, she has been integral in assisting with the implementation and review of the scheme. Sue is a TVN by background so she understands it from both sides and in her previous TVN role she implemented a successful non-prescription service in her area.

Julie Mullings, community matron tissue viability and infection prevention, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group has enjoyed utilising the SBS Framework for the provision of wound care products across over 190 sites including all District Nurse, Practice Nurse and Nursing Homes. The main benefit to the Framework was the simplicity in signing up, removing the time and cost associated in running a procurement exercise and the option to freely use any one of the three providers in the knowledge that the main pricing structure is standardised. We have benefited from the advice and expertise provided by Carolyn Lawton and her team throughout our time

using the Framework and we look forward to continuing to work with Carolyn.

Ross Burton, medicines optimisation pharmacist, Oxfordshire CCG

CONCLUSION

NHS SBS and its delivery partners are passionate about providing clinicians with choice and the autonomy to ensure that their patients receive the right dressing at the right time for their wound. The ultimate goal of this framework is to provide clinicians with a complete wound care service which releases nursing hours and reduces costs, while at the same time optimising patient outcomes, improving wound healing rates and reducing waste. **JCN**

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For more information...

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