

NHS Supply Chain Inventory Management and Point of Care Solutions

NHSE has shared its priorities and operational planning guidance for 2023/24 that states “NHS Supply Chain will lead the implementation of an inventory management and point of care solution. National funding will support providers that do not have effective inventory management systems.”

NHS Supply Chain is working on the initial deployment of inventory management and point of care solutions into acute NHS trusts. The deployment model will provide a scalable and cost-effective approach to help enable greater inventory visibility at regional and national levels. Expressions of interest have been received from a high number of trusts and active engagement is underway to assess readiness to deploy the solutions. Over the next two years NHS Supply Chain will partner with 20 NHS trusts through the programme, supported by inventory management solution providers that will bring the technical solution to enable local system integrations and point of care scanning to help enable wider Scan4Safety objectives.

The programme scope will deploy inventory management and point of care solutions to provide inventory visibility of high-risk medical devices in high-cost areas of the trust. To ensure maximum value of the programme this will include establishing point of care capability, supporting trusts to then roll out further across their wards and theatres.

Sara Ford, Strategy, Marketing and Change Executive Director said *“The rollout will bring efficiency and cash savings benefits at a local level, while nationally it is joining up the dots up across the system from an inventory perspective. By leveraging this technology to combine data we can start to look across the NHS to improve the resilience of the supply chain.”*

NHS Supply Chain will provide a centrally managed deployment team experienced in delivering inventory management solution. NHS Supply Chain are also establishing a centre of excellence to work alongside trusts to establish and embed best practice in areas such as change management, benefits realisation, data standards and in-hospital logistics.

Through this partnership approach participating NHS trusts will need to provide a small local team to work alongside the NHS Supply Chain deployment teams to ensure local projects are successfully, and sustainably, delivered.

NHS Supply Chain recognises that success can only be delivered through collaboration and have established a panel of NHS trusts who are passionate about using inventory management to drive out healthcare supply chain costs, increase resilience and improve patient safety. This group will provide expertise and share their learning from their inventory management journeys.

William Spray, National Customer Voice Engagement Manager said "We are very pleased that trusts are participating in regular workshops and working with us to develop a national model. Being able to work collaboratively across trusts, ICBs and other NHS bodies is allowing NHS Supply Chain to form a meaningful and valuable, and active community that brings a wealth of benefits to the system. I am looking forward to what we can achieve together".

The programme will use GS1 Standards as part of its deployment and is an enabler of Scan4Safety and as such is working closely with NHS England to ensure goals and objectives are aligned.