

Partnership approach for clear visibility, accurate data and successful patient outcomes

Pressure relieving equipment



NHS Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS Hillingdon) contracted NHS Shared Business Services (NHS SBS) to help reduce the cost of pressure relieving equipment in care homes, as defined by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) registration, and residential settings including community clinics.

The challenge

NHS Hillingdon contracted NHS SBS to undertake a mini competition for a new supplier of pressure relieving equipment services. The specifications of the procurement required a supplier that could:

- Manage the inventory for all pressure relieving equipment
- Operate a scheduled delivery, installation and collection service, with the aim of minimising disruption to patients and carers
- Ensure that no patient had to wait longer than three days for equipment to be delivered
- Operate an urgent service within 24 hours for high-risk patients, as assessed by the health professional
- Provide off-site decontamination services with clear timescales
- Undertake functionality and portable appliance testing (PAT) annually
- Carry out all service, maintenance and repairs

The solution

With a detailed specification, NHS SBS led the mini competition and engagement with its Framework suppliers.

Clarifications during the bidding and evaluation process were also managed by NHS SBS via the EU Supply Portal, a key tool for effective management of tenders.

NHS SBS also led the bid evaluation panel and provided clear direction to the NHS Hillingdon stakeholders to ensure that scoring was in line with the published criteria.

Key points

- Client:** NHS Hillingdon Clinical Commissioning Group
- Project:** Pressure relieving equipment
- Timeframe:** February 2015
- Result:** £335,000 procurement saving against previous supplier (targeted at £40,000).

Effective working between supplier, NHS Hillingdon and Central North West London (CNWL) clinical representatives.

Bespoke online equipment ordering for improved processes and order tracking.

Clear visibility and reporting on prescribing, equipment and costs to monitor KPI's.

Improved patient data.

Product bar coding for accurate traceability and cost avoidance.

As part of the bid process, NHS SBS facilitated clinical evaluation of products and input on product adoption and utilisation in line with patient needs.

A new supplier was appointed to run the service for an initial period of two years, with the option to extend the contract for a further two years, without challenges.

During the transitional period the new supplier was given seven weeks to collect and reissue 755 pieces of equipment from residential settings and care homes. However, the incumbent supplier only provided patient data one working day before the

contract began; which led to time challenges during week one.

Upon analysing the data a number of inconsistencies were uncovered including incorrect patient contact details and deceased patients whose equipment had previously been collected.

To ensure that timescales were still met, the supplier forged strong relationships with CNWL clinical representatives along with NHS Hillingdon. Through partnership working, any issues and concerns were quickly addressed and resolved.

District Nurse teams and their administrators helped complete missing patient information to enable the supplier to plan logistics and notify more than 500 patients of the change of supplier and the need to exchange their loan equipment.

The result

Thanks to the rapid response of the supplier and NHS Hillingdon teams, letters notifying patients of a change in supplier were issued during agreed timescales.

A designated team then followed this up to arrange convenient dates and times to exchange equipment. Excellent logistical planning accommodated deliveries Monday to Friday; both am and pm. To maximise exchanges, the supplier also worked with CNWL District Nurse teams to contact next of kin or respective care agencies.

'Blind' deliveries were carried out to patients that could not be contacted on the last week of the contract roll out. This reduced the number of outstanding exchange items by 22%, which could have cost NHS Hillingdon £25,000 to write off items.

A bespoke web-based portal for easy online ordering of prescribed equipment was facilitated by the supplier. The portal provides a number of beneficial features including:

- Seamless and time saving prescribing process that allows community nursing assistants to request equipment upon instruction by a clinical prescriber. This will improve patient care through earlier intervention against pressure ulcer development/treatment.
- Clearer visibility of prescribed equipment to monitor trends and inform future catalogue management.
- Monthly report generation of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).
- Tracking and traceability of orders, delivery timescales and order status. This facility will help reduce administration to District Nurse teams as they can see when items have been delivered; removing the requirement to contact patients and confirm delivery/receipt. It will also free up time for front line patient care.

- Ability to update patient records, contact details and other relevant information; ensuring data accuracy.
- Use of product bar coding and product scanning for accurate traceability.

The implementation of the new contract ran smoothly and product quality and supplier service meet the needs of NHS Hillingdon.

Procurement savings are expected to deliver £335,000 over the duration of the contract.

Mark Eaton – AD Transformation at NHS Hillingdon says: “We had been operating with a very poorly defined contract and tender waivers for a period of time and it was obvious that our patients were not being well served nor were we obtaining value for money from the arrangement.

“Through working with NHS SBS we were able to both build a better service specification and run a highly successful procurement that has not only generated substantial QIPP (Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention) efficiencies but also led to a completely different relationship between the CCG and the new supplier.

“Feedback from patients and prescribers has been excellent throughout and with the support of NHS SBS we effected one of the smoothest transitions we have ever had in moving from the old supplier to the new.”