

# National Wound Care Strategy Programme: Supply and Distribution Workstream update



NICKY MORTON  
*NWCSP Lead for Supply and  
Distribution Work Stream*

Having been involved in the work of the National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP) for several years as a member of the supply and distribution workstream, I am excited to now be leading this workstream. The NWCSP team is expanding, with projects progressing at pace, which is fantastic news given the challenges over the last 18 months.

Having reconvened in May following a pause due to COVID-19 pandemic pressures, the Supply and Distribution Workstream has now met on several occasions (via Teams of course). Our initial focus is to continue the development of the wound care product classification system.

Although there are several existing systems for classifying wound care products, a review of these confirmed that none were able to support adequate reporting to provide accurate data on product use across the various supply routes. The NHS needs to be able to report some basic grouping of products, to use as the foundation for analytic outputs. While this does not need to be in too much detail, it does need to retain some level of clinical relevance so that clinical staff can access meaningful information. The existing systems also lack adequate capability to inform clinical decision support based on wound aetiology and tissue type. Following discussion with the Department of Health & Social Care it was agreed that there was a need for a single classification system and that the NWCSP was the appropriate body to take on this project.

Our priority now is to complete the classification system for the most commonly used types of wound dressings. The initial prototype has been populated with data from Trust formularies and industry partners to assist in design, development and refining the system. Once this work is completed, we will move on to develop classification for compression therapy, negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT) and

other products relevant to wound care.

Alongside this we have started work on an overview of different systems of supply and distribution for wound care products, again initially focussing on wound dressings. Selecting the most appropriate route (or routes) of supply can prove challenging, particularly in the community where access to products via FP10 (medical and non-medical prescribing), access to frameworks such as those hosted by NHS Supply Chain and NHS SBS and use of online ordering platforms and distributors provide a labyrinth of options. It has been said that 'one size fits nobody' and this seems very apt for this issue. Ensuring access to the right product, at the right time, for the right patient is key, and not surprisingly this may require more than one approach to achieve success.

This work seeks to identify and describe the key features of each route of supply so that healthcare commissioners and providers can determine the most appropriate route (or routes) for their organisation. Decision makers may want to review their local arrangements (e.g. storage availability for shelf stock, product delivery times, local availability of non-medical prescribers, or time spent by organising prescriptions) before making changes. This document which summarises the key features should then help them to determine the most favourable option. It is anticipated that we will be able to seek feedback on this draft work through a consultation in the autumn.

We have also established a new NWCSP Supplier Reference Group and this will meet for the first time in August to strengthen the programme's engagement with industry partners and to harness the expertise and support of suppliers of wound care products. Both suppliers and clinicians have already been incredibly supportive with testing and refining the wound product classification system. It is anticipated

that the Supplier Reference Group will further strengthen these links.

The NWCSP has also become aware of discussions in the tissue viability community around recent decisions affecting the availability of some foam dressings from NHS Supply Chain. We have alerted our colleagues in NHS Supply Chain and the Department of Health and Social Care to these concerns but this issue is outside the scope of the NWCSP. The NWCSP is not responsible for tendering or procurement processes for wound care products or for primary care prescribing. There are useful links on the NWCSP website to guide users to the appropriate sites for such queries.

However, sustainability is within scope for everyone. Preliminary contact has been made

with the Greener NHS, and Net Zero team who will be working with the NWCSP to look at the impact on the environment from changing patient pathways and product use. The report '*Delivering a 'Net Zero' National Health Service*' was published by NHS England/NHS Improvement in October 2020 and includes challenging but realistic targets to reduce the carbon footprint. It is exciting to be meeting with the team to explore how the NWCSP can work collaboratively with the implementation sites and industry partners to promote improvements to the NHS carbon footprint as well as to patients!



#### REFERENCE

NHS England (2020) Delivering a 'Net Zero' National Health Service. <https://tinyurl.com/n243eevs> (accessed 5 August 2021)