



2e. How to: Optimise stock inventory management



Why is it important?

Stock wastage has a huge environmental and financial impact. Out of date chemicals, dental products and stock often are disposed of in landfill or require specialist collection. Regular stock audit scan ensure that products nearing the end of their shelf life can be identified and used and wastage is minimised.

In larger facilities like hospitals, adopting the GS1 standards (Global Standards designed to improve efficiency, safety and visibility of supply chains) can also help to improve patient safety, by identifying stock which has reached dangerously low levels.



What does a Sustainable Practice look like?

Real life example:

Portsmouth Hospitals HSE Trust recognised the need for a good inventory management system. Knowing what stock is available at all times across the entire Trust not only reduces waste and saves money, but is essential for improved patient care. Their aim was to track all products from suppliers to the point-of-use, at patient level. They knew they needed to implement the use of GS1 standards, complying with the Department of Health's GS1 and PEPOL adoption strategy. To do this, the suppliers needed to be educated.

Between January 2014 and May 2015 the correct use of GS1 standards by these suppliers increased from 37% to 65%. Now they can receive products by simply scanning the outer packaging barcodes – pulling through all the serial, batch, lot numbers in one scan, as well as expiry dates. The individual product is only scanned at the point of use. This has resulted in inventory data being accurate – and visible to everyone across the Trust. Waste has been reduced to less than 1% and benefits have also been seen in the way recalls are managed - with products easily identified and removed from use, or tracked to patients.

Modelled example:

Louise is a practice manager at a mixed NHS/dental practice, which tracks all current stock via a spreadsheet, with an audit scheduled monthly.

This allows stock levels to be regularly assessed, with products nearing their expiry date highlighted. The stock is also stored so that items that must be used sooner are placed in front.

This system allows stock needs to be predicted, meaning orders are completed less frequently, which reduces the associated carbon emissions from transport.

Sara Harford, Darshini Ramasubbu, Brett Duane, Frances Mortimer - Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (2018)

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Actions

KEY:

Implementation: Easy = 😊😊😊 Less Easy = 😊

Investment Cost: Low = 💰 High = 💰💰💰

Financial return on Investment (ROI): Low = 🐷 High = 🐷🐷🐷🐷

Environmental benefit: Small = 🌍 Large = 🌍🌍🌍

- Audit stock monthly to identify any that is close to its expiry date and to inform ordering



- Reduce the frequency of orders once stock requirements can be more accurately predicted



Resources

Case studies:

H Portsmouth's Hospitals Inventory Management:

https://www.gs1uk.org/~ /media/documents/marketing-documents/gs1_uk__portsmouth_casestudy.pdf

More links:

GS1UK.ORG:

<https://www.gs1uk.org/our-industries/healthcare>

Duane. B, Ramasubbu. D, Harford. S, Steinbach. I, Stancliffe. R, Croasdale. K, Pasdeki-Clewer. E. (in press). Environmental sustainability and procurement; Purchasing products for the dental setting. British Dental Journal.

Dental Susnet, online network for improving the sustainability of dental services:

<https://networks.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk/dental-susnet>

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