

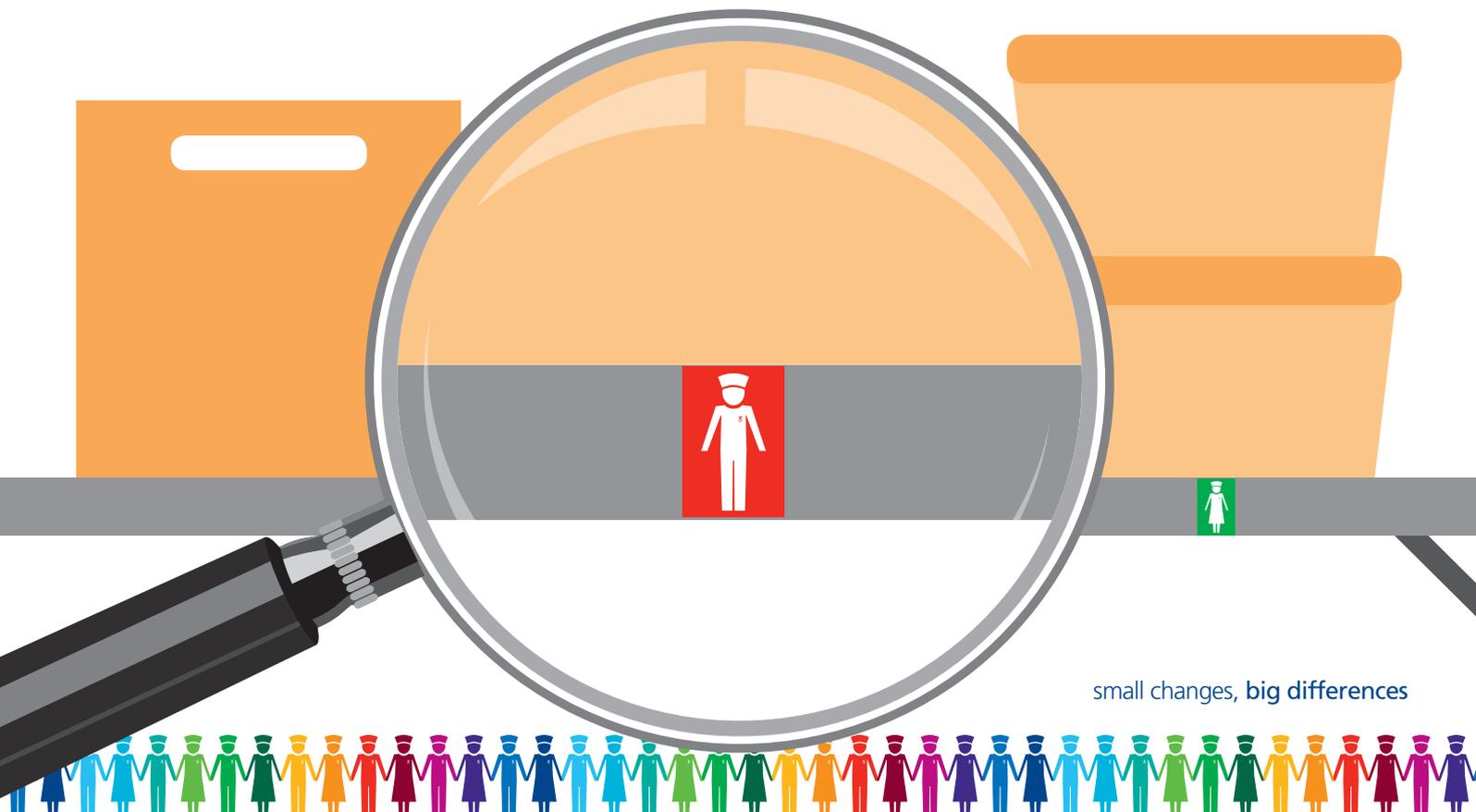
Traffic light support system Case Study



Key is that the **traffic light support system** has the potential to help nursing teams drive efficiencies in a way that can be easily adopted into their already incredibly busy days, so that most importantly, they can continue to fully focus on patient care.



Natalie O'Mahony, Assistant Operations Manager
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust



small changes, big differences



Q: How can nursing teams continue to focus fully on patient care whilst still delivering efficiencies and savings to help retain staff and frontline services?

A: There is potential for big savings through more effective purchasing of clinical supplies without compromising the quality of care.



Everyone knows about the financial pressures on the NHS. This is an opportunity for nursing staff to help identify savings as well as finding the products that are best and safest for patients.

It's nursing staff who are using clinical products on a daily basis. They're in a unique position to identify what works best for patients which products are safest and where savings can be made.



Janet Davies, Director of Nursing and Service Delivery
Royal College of Nursing

Challenge

We all know that NHS trusts are under financial pressure and it's becoming increasingly difficult to identify areas where savings can be made, whilst protecting frontline staff and services.

Procurement and purchasing has been highlighted as one of the challenges facing the NHS during this period of austerity. The NHS spends £20 billion every year on goods and services, of that sum £4.5 billion goes on clinical supplies.

Background

As a key organisation supporting the delivery of improved efficiencies and savings to the NHS around the purchasing of clinical supplies, NHS Supply Chain wanted to focus on how they could support the nursing community in these difficult economic times.

It became clear that helping raise awareness around how clinical supplies could be used more efficiently was not a new concept, with many trusts already investing in their own campaigns. One popular approach identified was the addition of stickers with prices on shelves, in storage rooms and areas to raise awareness of the cost of clinical supplies being used.

Feedback on this approach from a number of trusts confirmed that using stickers to increase awareness of cost was helping drive efficiencies. However, it was often difficult and labour intensive to manage, particularly keeping the stickers up to date as prices changed so often. Prices on too many items also meant it was hard not to become blind to a 'sea of stickers'.



Objective

For NHS Supply Chain to take this sticker concept started by nursing teams across the NHS to highlight cost efficiencies and develop it into a simple, less time demanding solution. The stickers needed a longer shelf life, with greater visibility and flexibility to help drive efficiencies and awareness. They also needed to be adaptable enough so they could be tailored to the individual needs of each trust.

Solution

NHS Supply Chain undertook further research with nursing teams, this highlighted early on that any solution must be easy to adopt and had to integrate seamlessly into the busy working days they already faced. It mustn't require any extra pull on their time or resource, feedback also indicated the more simple and visually striking the solution the better the results would be.

Taking all on board, NHS Supply Chain's Clinical Nurse Advisor Karen Hudson and Shelley Scothorne from their Communications Team, spent some time investigating ideas, resulting in the concept of the **traffic light support system** - a simple **red** (think), **amber** (consider) and **green** (go) sticker system to label clinical supplies in the stock room.

The purpose of the stickers being to help raise awareness of both the cost of clinical supplies nurses were using and of the broad value (£) of similar items also available for them to use in their stock rooms. The idea that they could then double check, with ease, to see if a less expensive item existed that could be used instead. An alternative that would still ensure patient safety, do the same job and also help deliver efficiencies and savings. The potential was also identified for the stickers to be used as a reminder to take care with the more expensive items they select.

As the concept was very different to something actually working in reality, the team contacted Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (PAT), who were keen to support a three month pilot of the system.



In order to deliver on-going efficiencies in the purchase and use of clinical supplies and further support the reduction in levels of potential risk of harm to patients, working collaboratively with your relevant clinical nursing teams is essential.

For progress to be made and importantly sustained for those involved, ensuring they see the value of the task ahead and fully understand the 'why', 'what', 'how' and 'when', is critical.



David Barwell, Head of Procurement
The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust



“

The success of the **traffic light support system** is reliant on team work and on-going communication, keeping everyone involved and up to speed at all times. ”

Sheila Smith, Senior Supplies Assistant
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

Approach

Project initiation

The trust started working with NHS Supply Chain in May 2014 supported by Head of Procurement **David Barwell**. With sponsorship from **Mandie Sunderland**, who was Chief Nurse at the time. **Natalie O'Mahony**, Assistant Operations Manager and **Sheila Smith**, Senior Supplies Assistant from Materials Management agreed to lead it.

Together they scoped out suitable sites and clinical supplies that could be piloted, along with a supporting toolkit.

Piloting the **traffic light support system** - which sites and which clinical supplies?

It was agreed that the system had to work across all the different types of stockrooms and storage areas across the entire trust - of differing sizes and formats, with wide variations in volume and type of clinical supplies stocked.

Eleven sites of varying size, from the smallest working stockroom in Surgery to the largest in A&E were selected.

Given the previous feedback that too many stickers would create a 'blindness' to the system, consideration of which clinical supplies was key.

Karen, Sheila and Natalie undertook the initial review and identified the following:

- Small, multiple, consumable easy-to-use clinical supplies that are used for similar purposes were ideal for the system.
- Clinical supplies available from multiple suppliers may cause challenges due to the regular changes in supplier and may not be suitable for the system.
- Not all clinical supplies within clinical areas may be suitable. A small, easy-to-use selection may be preferable here to aid manageability and effectiveness.
- Often clinical supplies are taken from working stockrooms to fulfil 'moving' stock hold, housed on moveable trolleys – which the **traffic light support system** had to address.



Left to right: Natalie O'Mahony, Assistant Operations Manager, PAT;
Karen Hudson, Clinical Nurse Advisor, NHS Supply Chain;
Shelley Scothorne, Clinical Communications Executive, NHS Supply Chain;
Sue Buckley, Sister, PAT; Sheila Smith, Senior Supplies Assistant, PAT



Based on these key findings, Sheila and Natalie selected a small group of clinical supplies across each of the eleven sites:

		Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust				
		Fairfield General Hospital		The Royal Oldham Hospital		
		Ward 14	Ward 10	Ward 14	Clinical Areas	Ward T7
Clinical Supplies	Pilot sites	Surgery: Small sized working stockroom	Surgery Working stockrooms: Small and medium	Accident and Emergency: Large sized working stockroom	Minors Majors Resus A&E	Surgery: Very large ward Store rooms: Clean utility B Clean utility A Main storeroom
		Adhesive surgical tapes 2.5 cm – Micropore				
Adhesive surgical tapes 2.5 cm – Transpore						
Cavilon barrier cream - sachets						
Cavilon barrier cream - foam applicators						
Cavilon barrier cream - tubes						
Chloraprep - sizes 0.67 ml						
Chloraprep - sizes 1.5 ml						
Chloraprep - sizes 3 ml						
Dressings - Opsite (smallest size)						
Dressings - Opsite Visible - 10 x 20 cm / 10 x 9 cm						
Dressings - Opsite Visible - 9.5 x 8.5 / 10 x 9 cm						
Duoderm - thin						
Duoderm - signal						
Giving sets - blood						
Giving sets - primary						
Giving sets - alaris						
Intersurgical mask and separate tubing						
Hudson facemask and tubing						
Medicine pots - paper						
Medicine pots - plastic						
Melolin dressings - 5 cm						
Melolin dressings - 10 cm						
Melolin dressings - 20 m						
Needles - Blunt fill						
Needles - Filter needles						
Syringes - 10 ml luer slip						
Syringes - 20 ml luer lock						

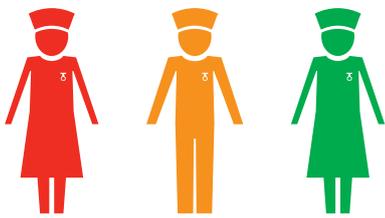


“

The simplicity of the **traffic light support system** is key.

”

Natalie O'Mahony, Assistant Operations Manager,
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust



Original design

What should the system look like and what support tools were needed?

To be effective, the system had to be both simple to use and visually impactful.

The Stickers

With the varying size and format of stockrooms and storage areas, along with the breadth of the many different clinical supplies stored - the stickers needed to be flexible to not only label the shelves supplies sit on, but also on the permanent boxes they may be stored in. They also needed to be striking enough to stand out in busy working environments. At the same time, they needed to be wipeable and easy to remove - not only to meet infection control standards, but also to avoid the requirement for extra nursing time and expense to manage the system.

Following a review of the differing store areas a universal size of sticker and design was agreed for the pilot (see left).

User Guide

With many key learnings and useful hints and tips already being captured, it was agreed a simple user guide would also be a useful addition to the toolkit.

Posters

Finally, it was discussed how best to highlight the presence of the system and raise awareness of it - with the consensus that a simple wipeable poster, that could be put up in each of the stores areas would be a good starting point.



Launching the Pilot

The pilot was implemented at the end of July 2014 and ran through to the beginning of November 2014, ensuring a solid three month testing period.

Three key milestones at which to pick-up and review the progress of the pilot were agreed by the team over the duration **1)** at its initial launch and implementation **2)** at a review after 6 weeks and finally **3)** a review at the end. Key learnings and feedback were captured at each of these stages and built back into the system and supporting tools.

Engaging Teams

It was identified engagement with the relevant teams early on was essential, with Sheila, Natalie and Karen providing regular updates to all those involved throughout the duration of the pilot. Over and above this, the pilot reaffirmed that sponsorship at a senior level was crucial. Mandie Sunderland's support not only raised awareness of the system, but also helped secure its adoption.



Empowering our nursing teams on the real differences they can make regarding purchasing and the potential it has to drive efficiencies, savings and improved patient safety is paramount – which the **traffic light support system** does in a simple and engaging way.

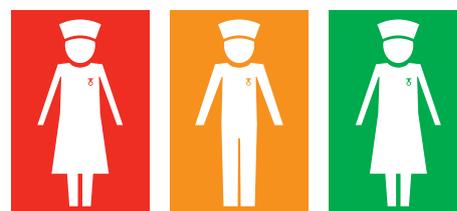


Mandie Sunderland, Chief Nurse
Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

Results

Developments made to the system during the pilot

- **Sticker sizes** – it was identified the initial sticker size agreed was a bit too large for use on some storage systems, so it was reviewed and its size reduced.
- **Sticker design** – whilst the original design did stand out, it was found in some very busy stockrooms it wasn't as visible as it needed to be. The sticker was redesigned taking this on board for greater impact (see right).
- **Posters** – given the complexity and size of the different areas, it was identified that multiple posters were often needed to effectively raise awareness of the system. The user guide would be updated to reflect this.



New design



Results

Key learnings from the nursing teams involved.

From a survey run at the end of the pilot with the nursing teams involved, it was identified that the **traffic light support system** had raised awareness of the cost of clinical supplies.

Over half of the teams involved advised a red sticker on a product drawer would highlight to them that there may be a cost effective alternative to that product.

In addition, feedback highlighted:

- The system had great potential to reduce the time spent looking for clinical supplies and to help with standardisation.
- The majority of teams were not always aware of the cost of clinical supplies they were using, as they were not directly involved in purchasing decisions. However, simply through the implementation of the system, purchasing was put on their radar, giving them the opportunity to volunteer new ideas that could potentially make savings and improve patient safety.
- Whilst all teams had already invested in on-going work to drive efficiencies and savings in their areas – further new and innovative ways were identified in every area the **traffic light support system** was piloted.
- Communication around the system ensuring everyone who needs to know about it does, is key. Existing opportunities to share updates, such as morning team briefings and other regular catch-ups should be considered, avoiding duplication of effort and creating more work.
- Good practice sharing - individuals with specific examples were identified that it was felt could be easily be replicated across the trust - with the potential for significant impact with minimal time and effort required.
- With only just over a quarter of participants in the pilot happy to be more involved in decisions around which clinical supplies are standardised in the future, this highlighted a level of disengagement around purchasing and the need to get it back in the spotlight – in a simple but impactful way.



“ I now have an awareness of the cost of some clinical supplies I use due to the **traffic light support system** and will use alternative clinical supplies where possible, as long as it is the right decision for the patient. ”

Healthcare Assistant
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust



Getting started

1

Assess

- **Think!** Who needs to be involved in developing and launching your **traffic light support system**?
Agree your support team. e.g. Head Of Procurement (HoP), Materials Management, Chief Nurse, Infection Prevention and Control, Director of Services Surgery/Medicine etc (nurse), Selected Area Nurse Leads etc.
- **Visit your HoP** - it is essential procurement are fully engaged from the outset.
- **Materials Management / Procurement Lead** - ask your HoP to arrange a meeting with Materials Management. Securing a lead to help you identify which areas are most suitable for the system is crucial.
- **Identify your selection criteria and agree which products, stockrooms and additional storage areas are suitable:**
 - The system is for use with existing working stock
 - Run your Trust Reports (TRs) to see exactly what products you are using across the trust
 - Look for opportunities where more than one product could be used for same/similar procedure i.e. differing suppliers, differing sizes etc
 - Look for high value items that should always be handled with care.
- Agree timescales.
- Agree how you will measure the success of the system.

Consider

- **Applying a consistent set of criteria against all products** - this will make it easier to understand and measure the success of the total system.
- **Piloting the system over a handful of clinical areas** - this can help you identify which products and areas work best for your trust, before a wider roll-out.
- **Keep the number of products you are applying the system to, manageable** - depending on the size of the store room/department, to prevent 'blindness' and non-compliance.
- **Trust Report (TRs) are a useful tool** - talking to clinical staff in the area alongside the Materials Management team is essential to ensure the project is real and works for all clinical teams involved.
- **Always share information** - across your support team and with all relevant departments to agree and ensure one compliant approach to the project.

2

Launch

- **Place the stickers on the shelves and permanent product storage boxes.**
- **Let everyone know what you're doing** - encourage senior members and support teams to cascade information to all, use the posters and make the user guides easily available in stock rooms and racking systems in clinical areas etc.
- **Brief your teams** - make clear why you are undertaking this project, encouraging and empowering your teams to make choices which can contribute to patient safety, support the frontline and deliver savings whilst still retaining clinical choice.
- **Share the potential benefits of the system and the specific objectives for your trust** - e.g. standardised products on the shelf that are easier for clinical staff to find supporting improved patient safety, with time and money saved.
- **Make clear why working together is so important** - everyone has a valuable part to play to ensure the success of the system.

Consider

- **Materials Management support** - can they support you to ensure the lower priced green and amber products are located next to the red products in your stockroom for ease-of-selection?
- **Not putting stickers on disposable items** - as this would mean new stickers would constantly need reapplying, adding workload for your Materials Management Team.
- **Display posters and user guides** - so they are never too far away from any stickers. Even in smaller storage areas multiple posters and user guides may need to be used to ensure they are visible in these busy environments.
- **Briefing teams about the system** - avoid extra work and build briefings into the regular catch-ups you have already.



3

Keeping the project alive

- **Raise awareness** - keep the awareness posters in your stockrooms and relevant communal areas, provide regular updates at team meetings.
- **Trust support team contact** - ensure a support team contact name is written on the posters to ensure you can answer and support your teams with any questions they may have.
- **Keep the project moving at pace** - keep in touch with your teams and agree from the outset how you will share project updates e.g. send monthly emails to leads in chosen areas to see how it is progressing, ask if they need further material support, encourage them to have catch-ups with their teams to find out how they are getting on and if they have any new ideas they may have for how the **traffic light support system** could be used.



In order to deliver on-going efficiencies in the purchase and use of clinical supplies and further support the reduction in levels of potential risk of harm to patients, working collaboratively with your relevant clinical nursing teams is essential.

For progress to be made and importantly sustained for those involved, ensuring they see the value of the task ahead and fully understand the 'why', 'what', 'how' and 'when', is critical.



David Barwell, Head of Procurement
The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

Infection Prevention and Control support

Whilst the stickers are wipeable and can easily be removed, it is important you work with your Infection Prevention and Control teams, as they can help you implement the system ensuring it meets all your Infection Prevention and Control requirements. For example: 1) not applying new stickers on top of old stickers and making sure where you place the sticker is prepped and clear of residue; 2) not applying stickers in areas where there is a high chance of the build-up of dirt.



Spring 2015
Implementation of the
traffic light support
system at Colchester
Hospital University
NHS Foundation
Trust and Rotherham
Doncaster and
South Humber NHS
Foundation Trust.

Next steps

- Visit www.supplychain.nhs.uk/trafficlights to download your user guide and order your free traffic light support system starter pack.
- Visit www.rcn.org.uk/smallchanges to learn more about the campaign – supported by the Royal College of Nursing, NHS Supply Chain and the Clinical Procurement Specialist Network to see how you can get involved.

What could savings mean to you and your trust?

- Every £10 saved could equate to an online PREP 10 credit module.
- Every £30,000 saved could equate to a band 5 nurse.
- Every £40,000 saved could equate to developing the career pathway for a band 6 nurse.
- That your department makes the savings it needs.
- That your trust makes the savings it needs.

About the trust

Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust serves a population of around 800,000 in the north-east sector of Greater Manchester.

The trust operates across four hospital sites: North Manchester General Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital, The Royal Oldham Hospital and Rochdale Infirmary.

They employ 9,000 staff including around 4,000 nurses across its hospitals and community services.

NHS Supply Chain does not endorse, favour or recommend any other party's products, processes or services that may feature in this case study. Accordingly, the appearance of any such products, processes or services in this case study may not be used in any third party advertising or product endorsement purposes.



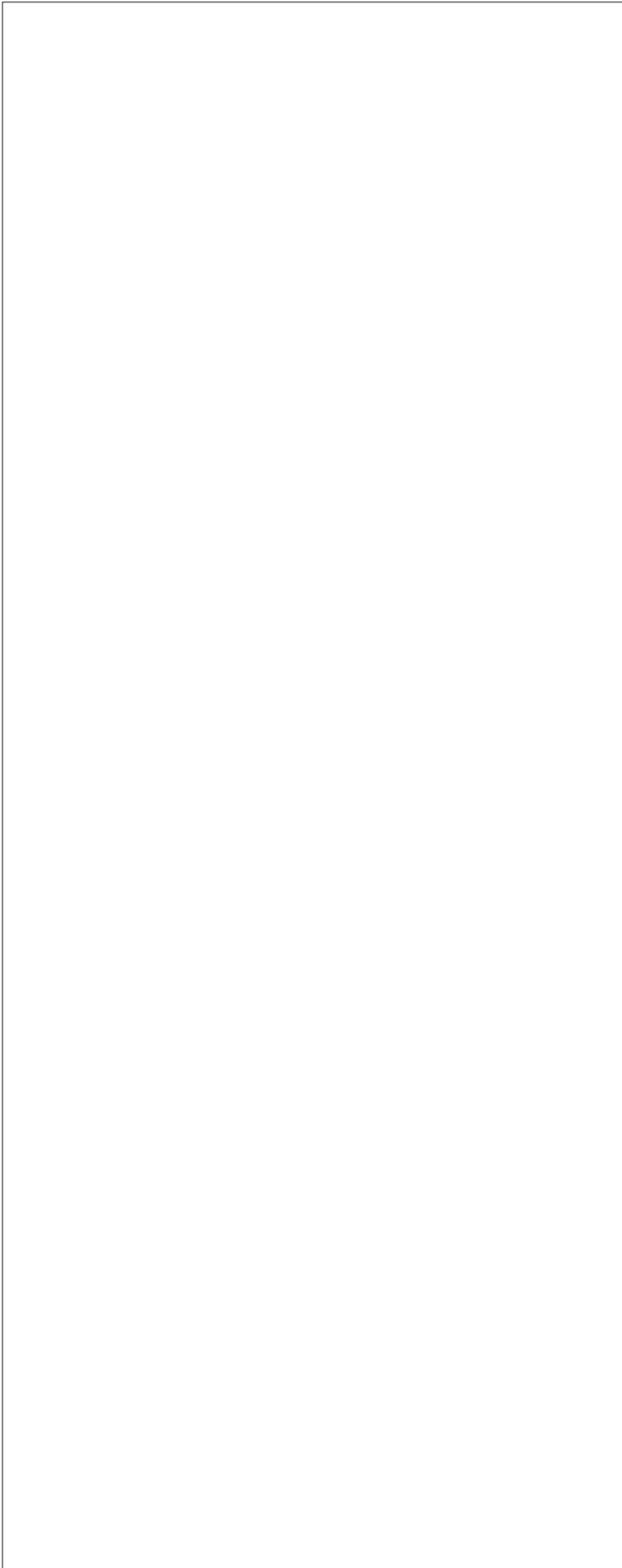
“ Early engagement with nursing teams means they are already identifying many different and individual ways that they could use the **traffic light support system** to support a variety of initiatives in their wards and departments.

This could be as simple using the amber sticker for glove selection, ‘Should you be using a glove?’ ‘Is it the right glove?’ etc. We are also developing new ideas for the use of green and reds including a ‘high cost product’ awareness week using red stickers.

”

Liam Horkan, Clinical Procurement Specialist Nurse
Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust





The **traffic light support system** was identified as the most useful tool by nursing teams when considering how to improve safety, quality and value in their organisation by looking at the clinical supplies they buy.

Source: Clinical Supplies Quality, Safety and Value at the Frontline
Nursing Times Survey, December 2014.

Order your FREE traffic light support system starter pack,
download the user guide and case study.
www.supplychain.nhs.uk/trafficlights

Learn more about the campaign and see how you can get involved:
www.rcn.org.uk/smallchanges

Any **questions** or for more information on the different ways NHS Supply Chain can support your trust to drive efficiencies, save and support the frontline, contact your Trust Procurement.

