

Towards a framework for enhancing procurement and supply chain management practice in the NHS: lessons for managers and clinicians from a synthesis of the theoretical and empirical literature

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Declared competing interests of authors: none

Published April 2015

DOI: 10.3310/hsdr03180

Plain English summary

Enhancing NHS procurement and supply chain management practice

Health Services and Delivery Research 2015; Vol. 3: No. 18

DOI: 10.3310/hsdr03180

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Plain English summary

New structures and policies are being introduced in the NHS as a result of recent legislation: the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Family doctors alongside other clinicians and managers are now organised as Clinical Commissioning Groups, which are in charge of procuring health-care services from providers for patients. Procurement of health-care-related goods and services also takes place in NHS hospitals. Those doing procurement in Clinical Commissioning Groups and NHS hospitals need to gain a greater understanding of how this activity is done in commercial settings to improve their skills in the NHS. This study reviews research that has been done in this area already, presents an overview of it and uses it to suggest ways that clinicians and managers in the NHS can carry out their procurement role better. It first looks at studies that explain how procurement should be done in theory and then looks at how this compares with what has been done in the NHS over its recent history. It then looks at how procurement is carried out in other places and other types of industry, and from this review suggests improvements. By looking at this previous research, the study concludes that NHS staff involved in procurement need to address different procurement situations in different ways using a portfolio approach. This means that there are choices about how health-care goods and services might be procured and that these should be made appropriately in line with the nature of what is being procured and with circumstances.

Health Services and Delivery Research

ISSN 2050-4349 (Print)

ISSN 2050-4357 (Online)

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This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HS&DR programme or one of its preceding programmes as project number 12/5004/03. The contractual start date was in July 2013. The final report began editorial review in July 2014 and was accepted for publication in November 2014. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HS&DR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

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