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Demonstrating success in healthcare

Purchase to pain: How to break the cycle

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Purchase to pay (P2P) isn't just a financial process, it has a big impact on the patient journey and is at the core of running a hospital – there's always a person at the end of the process that will be affected by it.

P2P encompasses many processes, including master data management, inventory management and sourcing. Because it relies on so many factors, it's easy for something to go wrong. Inaccurate orders, manual interventions, lack of traceability and visibility and other errors can all keep the P2P process from working effectively.

Using barcodes can increase the efficiency of the P2P process, but only if it is implemented with all factors in mind: people, process and technology. There's no point in telling people to 'use the barcodes efficiently', without looking at the process and explaining exactly how benefits can be achieved.



How was the problem solved?

The first step is understanding the related processes, by asking:

- Who owns the process/policies?
- What are the different elements across the organisation impacted by the P2P process?
- What are your problem areas/pain points?
- What are the potential benefits?

Next, you need to review and challenge existing process and policies. Just because a policy currently exists doesn't mean it has to in the future. At this point you should be able to determine if the problems are system-related or people-related. You could have the best system in the world, but if the people aren't behind it, it will fail.

Finally, you should update, implement and monitor your processes. A process can always be improved. Key success factors here are communication, change management and training – to ensure that people fully understand how the process can be improved and how benefits can be achieved.

How are GS1 standards part of the solution?

Standards are the foundation to build on. They are the drivers of the P2P process and enable it to work efficiently and effectively. The GS1 standards being introduced at Salisbury, for example, include:

- GDS (Global Data Synchronisation) for master data management
- GTINs (Global Trade Item Numbers) to identify products
- GLNs (Global Location Numbers) to identify locations

In line with Department of Health's eProcurement strategy Salisbury are also implementing PEPOL standards for procurement processes.

What are the benefits?

GS1 standards improve the efficiency of the P2P process through:

- Better understanding of the process
- Reduced manual intervention
- Improved supplier relationships

They also enable the provision of accurate master data, which increases visibility and enhances spend analytics. GS1 standards allow the Trust to track and trace items both in the supply chain and in the hospital, which results in clinical time that can be returned to patient care.

In short, GS1 standards decrease costs, while improving patient safety.

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