Module 5 Provisional Outline of Scope

Procurement and distribution of key equipment and supplies

This module will consider and make recommendations regarding the procurement and distribution to end-users across the four nations of the United Kingdom of key healthcare related equipment and supplies, including PPE, ventilators and oxygen.

This module will investigate the robustness and effectiveness of procurement processes, the adequacy of the items obtained (including their specification, quality and volume) and the effectiveness of their distribution to the end-user. It will examine any challenges experienced and seek to extract lessons to be learned.

It will also consider the UK-wide procurement of lateral flow tests and PCR tests.

Areas to be covered in this module will include:

1. The existence and effectiveness of processes, procedures and/or contractual provisions in place for the procurement and distribution of key healthcare equipment and supplies to the end-user prior to and during the pandemic, the suitability and resilience of the supply chains and what, if any, changes were made to procurement processes during the pandemic and have been made subsequently. This will include examination of:

    a. The overall value of the contracts awarded;

    b. Preparedness, including pre-existing stockpiles, inventory management and suitability;

    c. Spending controls;

    d. Steps taken to eliminate fraud and the prevalence of fraud;

    e. Conflicts of interest;

    f. Contractual performance by suppliers and manufacturers;

    g. Compliance with public law procurement principles and regulations;

    h. Openness and fairness, including the ‘high priority lane’;

    i. Decisions as to what to buy at what cost and disposal strategies;

    j. The existence of any maladministration.

2. Procurement of key healthcare equipment and supplies to the end-user in the period leading up to and during the pandemic. This will include the existence and effectiveness of procedures, processes and communication between the relevant bodies of the four nations in relation to procurement and the use made of mutual aid arrangements during the pandemic.

3. The operation and effectiveness of any regulatory regimes and/or oversight (either by the procuring authority or end user) in relation to key medical equipment or supplies

during the pandemic including:

a. Guidance issued by the relevant advisers, regulators and/or government;

b. The need for, and the efficacy of standards required by the MHRA and the BSI;

c. The impact of any changes to the volume, technical specifications and/or quality of the products that were procured;

d. The validation process including benchmarks and revalidation;

e. Safety concerns (the existence of such concerns and how they were addressed by those responsible for procurement).