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IMPROVING VISIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT - REPORT 1

Introduction

1. This report has been compiled by the author at the direction and on behalf of Welsh Government, the author has and continues to be seconded to work with NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership as a Military Planner for logistics support and strategic medical supplies.

Aim

2. This document aims to provide an overall assessment of the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP or simply SSP) Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) supply system across Wales; offering an overview and summary of work conducted by the military in support of the Welsh Government (WG). It will further expand on issues found during these military assessments of the SSP system across both the NHS-Wales (NHS-W) supply systems, and within the Local Authority and Social Care supply systems before laying out recommendations for improvements within the Welsh system.

3. The document includes two reports as enclosures and two additional supporting briefs laying out potential solutions. The first report details the support carried out by the military personnel within NHS-W in direct support of strained Hospital PPE store systems, review of PPE storage facilities and the PPE supply management personnel training. The second offers a more detailed solution to one of the key recommendations (at Para 23), that of the establishment of a National pan Wales single returns and reporting system as well as proposing a solution.

Executive summary

4. **The overall assessment of the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership and the delivery of PPE within Wales is as follows. With maintained and regular stock inflow from UK sources and WG sourced supplies, better stock control, reporting and demand mechanisms, the PPE supply and distribution within Wales although fragile can sustain within the current demand phase. No evidence has been found of the system running out of PPE at any stage. If the recommendations proposed in this report are not acted upon, SSP could be capable to continue past the 'surge peak' phase we are moving into and crucially, maintain supplies in the event of a return to COVID-19 surge conditions. However, the system would remain inefficient and costly, inflexible and lack the full visibility of PPE stock levels, consumption and potential blockages (stockpiling) within the supply and distribution system.**

Summary of Key Recommendations

- a) Nomination of a single overall responsible officer for PPE and the SSP organisation, able to act as the single authority or controller issuing both guidance and direction whilst communicating situational awareness (to improve confidence) and enacting decisions (as well as monitoring and following up for completion). (Para 17 details)
- b) Establishment of a National pan Wales single returns and reporting system encompassing orders and report back measures. Key recommendation in establishing a Common Logistics Picture for SSP enabling modelling and PPE consumption predictions. (Para 23 details)
- c) Implementation of regular (recommended minimum weekly) internal communications of stock levels, deliveries, combined with practical direction and guidance for PPE consumption rates as well as issues. (Para 36 details)
- d) Establish a procurement strategy based around demand and consumption modelling and continue with WG led PPE procurement and supply in the short term, whilst rebuilding resilience within the pandemic and 'IP5 BREXIT store'. (Para 40 details)
- e) Consider establishment of a longer-term Pan Wales SSP led unified training scheme to enable efficiency of delivery for these improvements and those already recommended under previous reports. (Para 50 details)

Overview

5. The Wales PPE supply chain is assessed as robust in distribution links with fragility for surge conditions. Critical weakness identified at Local Authority/Primary Healthcare distribution centres and within Social Care distribution, with no local stock issue or control mechanisms leading to uncontrolled consumption and poor consumption demand tracking processes. Military support was required to assist in stabilising and improving NHS HB stock issue and control mechanisms within key Hospitals. Despite recent supplies from UK national holdings overall Wales Stock continues to become increasingly strained and overdrawn. There still remains a real possibility of SSP and Wales stock exhaustion in central stores if further delay or failure of national deliveries from UK Storage. There has been no evidence found of PPE stock outages at frontline locations across the NHS-W supply systems and the Social Care supply systems; at no point has Wales run out of PPE.

6. National and regional storage and distribution capacity remains fit for purpose, but there still remains a perception among 'frontline' staff both within the NHS and social care sector that there are shortages of PPE. This 'lack of confidence' has resulted in unsustainable practices of stock hoarding in certain parts of the system and over demand. In part this is due to a lack of a shared common logistics picture of what stock is in forward locations, what consumption rates are and a lack of common understanding of what a 'day of supply' consists of for all the various stakeholders. This means that NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (SSP) do not have a clear understanding of demand.

7. However overall assessment is that with maintained and regular stock inflow from UK sources, better stock control, reporting and demanding mechanisms, the PPE supply and distribution within Wales although fragile, can sustain within the current demand phase, past the 'surge peak' phase we are moving into and crucially, in the event of a return to COVID-19 surge conditions. System remains strained but functional, and needs to become more efficient in its stock management beyond SSP control. Undertaking these improvements will build resilience in the system should exceptional demand be again placed on it, caused by a rapid increase in COVID-19 or an unforeseen issue with the UK or current Wales Supply into the SSP.

b) Inaccurate Reports and returns system, DCR calculations and modelling

24. **Establishing the Common Logistics Picture.** One of the critical findings from several reports and through daily contact of the SSP system is a lack of a shared Common Logistics Picture. This would comprise of what stock is in forward locations, what consumption rates are (and how they will evolve) and a common understanding of what a 'day of supply' consists of for all the various stakeholders⁹ throughout the organisation. The Common Logistics Picture is the critical information enabling long term prediction of stock consumption and therefore establish a procurement strategy to last the crisis pandemic period. It also would allow efficient management internal to the supply chain; enable identification of excess holdings (stock hoarding), sideways movement of stock at each level of chain (mutual aid between hospitals, HB's, Local Authorities and Care Homes) and enable long term planning to improve procurement efficiencies. Enclosure 2¹⁰ expands on these points.

25. **Reports and returns.** A Common Logistics Picture is dependent on an accurate and regular information management system. Reports and returns accuracy within the current SSP system is limited to the centres, hubs and organisations with direct SSP management (Strategic hub and three key NHS Regional stores). Visibility of stock movement at these levels is assessed as accurate and timely. The key locations and hubs further down the supply chain (7 HB Regional stores, 11 Community Care Stores and further locations within these chains) do not complete accurate returns data or provide communication of demand at this level in the supply chain. Demand signals/returns are produced by these stores when stock levels are low require replenishment, but this does not accurately forecast demand changes or consumption changes (Daily Consumption Rates) or show actual store holdings at these sites. This results in SSP not having a clear understanding of demand across the Wales wide system or stock held at individual locations¹¹.

26. Widespread excessive use of PPE and poor supply management at lower levels within the chain, CMO guidelines have been clarified but there is still evidence of overuse and some stock piling in the system, with different HB's utilising stock deliveries in its own way as well as self-supplying. This means the understand part of what supply is needed to meet demand is not clear. Poor reporting techniques means sight of stock once in the system is poor meaning effective and efficient transfer of stock is not manageable e.g. surge based 'sideways transfers' between HB's, Hospitals, Care homes etc. Again, combined with the above factor it means effectively predicting what stock you need to move to a more sustainable delivery supply method is challenging.

27. **DCR (Daily Consumption Rate) modelling.** No accurate or useable model was in use during the start of the crisis or has yet to be produced despite several efforts from organisations within WG¹², which would allow prediction of consumption of PPE within Wales. A lack of accurate DCR (Daily Consumption Rate), established from effective reports and returns system, would enable forecasting of consumption and the development towards a pandemic procurement strategy. Standardisation of this system would also enable the move back to a Business as normal mentality within the crisis period.

28. Recent developments such as the Deloitte PPE stock dashboard model although hugely beneficial, are undermined due to the inaccuracies of this upwards reporting within the Wales wide SSP system. Without improvement to this reporting system the Deloitte model will always be limited to demonstrating stock supplied into the system (top down) only as the basis of a consumption model without accurately showing surges in consumption. This limits its use to predicting stock left in the system based on the recent issued stock tracking by SSP, during the surge conditions. By combining accurate reports and returns across the SSP system, full use of

⁹ Report: 20200403-OP RESCRIPT- WELSH GOVERNMENT PPE DISTRIBUTION MAT REPORT

¹⁰ File reference: 20200508 - Enclosure 2-PPE Improving Visibility and Management-Interim System-WG-Sercombe-DRAFT-OS

¹¹ Demand management at care home level is fragile. Numerous reports have been made of there being no system in place to enable feedback and submit demands with SSP from the Care homes sectors.

¹² For example, SSP and within WG the SPI-M group (Scientific Pandemic Influenza - Modelling group)