As the NHS shifts to try to match rising demand against tighter budgets, there is an opportunity for Dispensing Appliance Contractors (DACs) to innovate and create new ways of working with prescribers that, against this challenging backdrop, delivers improved patient management while respecting clinical decisions.

As healthcare professionals, it is our responsibility to help reduce medicines waste but we also need to educate our patients to do their part: a collaborative approach. Health Minister Lord Howe commented recently on Radio 4 that patients can cut waste too by making sure they are using their stoma care and ostomy care products as intended by the clinician.

As a first step, it is important to understand how DACs operate. The way DACs are perceived by the NHS has an impact on our working relationship. Having looked into this, it is clear that DACs are very much seen as playing the role of ‘gatekeeper’ in the current climate of controlled NHS prescribing. More than this, we believe we have a very important part to play in helping healthcare professionals monitor their patients’ appliance use and spend through our service.

As an organisation, Fittleworth has spent a lot of time examining the dispensing process – from patient ordering right through to arrival of products at their front door. We unpicked some of the critical aspects of what is required from National Health Regulations (2009) on DACs, reviewed where data can provide insights into patient ordering patterns, and considered PrescQIPP guidelines, which aim to ensure optimised prescribing in the NHS.

From this research, and from ongoing conversations with healthcare professionals, we have established a new and unique programme that could help prescribers manage over-ordering costs and associated patient follow-up more efficiently and effectively without compromising patient care.

References:
**ProVIS** stands for Professional Visibility and it is available to any nurse or GP prescriber whose patients use Fittleworth. It is our free and unique patient management tool that provides nurses with relevant and useful visibility to patient-specific dispensing information. ProVIS reports enable nurses to track detailed prescribing spend, allowing them to intervene early to identify and help prevent any potential over-ordering and overspend.

Having developed ProVIS and inviting a small and specialist audience of potential users to gauge its value in 2013, we’ve been continually assessing it and looking for ways to improve this tool. This included evaluating its success via a 3-month pilot study with 5 specialist nurses. In cases where over-ordering was identified, we found that:

- 50% of patients required a review, education or a product change. Nurses were able to educate patients and discuss ways they could better manage their ordering without compromising their health product requirements
- 50% of patients had elevated use that met a clinical need, or they were tagged as the incorrect client type i.e. colostomy patient using a drainable pouch

As a result of nurse proactivity, coupled with ProVIS insights, nurses from the study have seen significant reductions in patient over-ordering, delivering cost savings of between £2,603 and £3,995 over a period of 4 months.

**Fittleworth ProVIS Ostomy Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Active Patients (Placed Orders in the last 12mths)</th>
<th>230</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Patients Marked as Active in Fittleworth Database</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Patients Attached (includes inactive/vitior)</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Monthly DTV Last 12 Months</td>
<td>£37,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Monthly DTV Previous 12 Months</td>
<td>£34,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Order Value (DTV) Last 12 Months</td>
<td>£207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Order Value (DTV) Previous 12 Months</td>
<td>£212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Monthly Orders per Patient Last 12 Months</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Monthly Orders per Patient Previous 12 Months</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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For more information about any of the topics covered or to register to receive your free ProVIS report, please contact the Fittleworth team:

**ONLINE**
Visit: clinicalrespect.co.uk
PHONE
Freephone: 0800 378 413
Telephone: 01903 731 244
EMAIL*
Your Name, Position, Hospital and Telephone Number to ProVIS@fittleworth.com

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*A final, but very important point is that Fittleworth is not a manufacturer, and, as an independent operator, we are able to deliver all products that are available to prescribe – thus we cover the entire market, and ProVIS data similarly covers all appliances and accessory products that might be prescribed across ostomy, urology and wound care.*

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**Clinical Respect** is our health provider promise to deliver excellence in patient care while helping achieve best value in prescribing. Central to our principles, Fittleworth is an independent, trusted and dedicated home dispensary for ostomy, urology, continence and wound care products that caters for the individual and varied needs of patients at a local level.

*Please note: by providing your email address you are confirming consent to be contacted by Fittleworth via email or phone.

Fittleworth Medical Limited, registered in England with company no. 1836221, registered office Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough, PE1 1JE.