



White Paper

Nursing Efficiency and Key Control in Medicine Management

ASSA ABLOY

Introduction

As Britain's National Health Service (NHS) continues to come under increased pressure and scrutiny, demands are placed on nursing staff to be more efficient, freeing up time to provide care for their patients.

Security expert Abloy UK is raising awareness of the pressures put upon nursing staff, and the potential drawbacks that can occur when the systems in place are not conducive towards effective medicine management and key control.

In this paper we explore the issues faced within the healthcare sector when it comes to managing the distribution of medicines, how this can have a significant impact of the efficiency of nurses, and aim to discover the best solution for key control in hospital wards across the UK.



Key Control and Medicine Management

In UK healthcare organisations, key control and medicine management poses a number of challenges.

The majority of hospitals, clinics and pharmacy departments use traditional mechanical lock systems to control and maintain the security of their drug cabinets.

A typical hospital ward will have several cupboards and fridges with a different key for each, and the ward manager or nurse, who is on duty for that time period, will be responsible for these keys for the duration of their shift.

Issues may arise when staff need access to cabinets and are not sure who has the keys at any given point, so valuable time is spent frantically looking for keys to provide patients with secured drugs - which in many cases are time-critical.

Keys that are lost, missing or suspected stolen must be reported to police and can reduce the operational effectiveness of the ward, all of which is a drain on valuable time and resources across the NHS.

Many wards simply leave cabinet doors open as caring for patients is viewed as of greater priority to drug security, even though this is in breach of the UK's Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulations. The number of wards that fail drug security audits by the CQC has risen dramatically in recent years.



Nursing Efficiency

Another area that is impacted by ineffective medicine management and key control is the efficiency of ward nurses.

A recent study by one NHS trust¹ shows that ward nursing staff spend between 30 to 40 minutes per eight-hour shift looking for keys to access controlled drug cabinets.

This means that a significant amount of nurses' time is taken up searching for keys, when it could be used much more effectively, looking after patients and performing other essential duties.

Abloy's Solution

In order to maximise nursing efficiency and ensure secure medicine management through effective key control, Abloy offers the web-based access control solution, PROTEC2 CLIQ.

The system is based on mechanical high security disc cylinders combined with highly encrypted electronic locking and identification, and offers dual locking – the highest level of mechanical locking combined with the highest level of electronic locking.

The system allows for the remote management of disparate or large electronic master-keyed sites at any time, from anywhere in the world. It also provides comprehensive audit trails on locks and padlocks and the ability to remove lost or stolen keys from the system, thereby providing tight key management at all times.

The Abloy PROTEC2 CLIQ system incorporates proprietary chip technology in the keys and locks as well as connectivity to the cloud. This securely stores important data, enabling the key to communicate each time it is used in a lock, which creates a valuable audit trail to record every time a key was used or access attempted. The system will even keep an audit of keys that attempt entry without appropriate permission.

What's more, PROTEC2 CLIQ is now also available with Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) keys, which can be enabled or validated via a smartphone or tablet, and access rights can be granted to the user 'on-site'.



Scunthorpe General Hospital

Abloy UK supplied high security PROTEC2 CLIQ locks and keys to North Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to upgrade the security of the drug cabinets at Scunthorpe General Hospital, in order to achieve significant cost and timesavings.

Like many hospitals across the UK, Scunthorpe General Hospital previously used a traditional mechanical lock system to control its drug cabinets. The ward had several cupboards and fridges with a different key for each and the ward manager/nurse in charge had possession of these for the duration of their shift.

However, this meant that a lot of nurses' time was spent searching for who had the keys, and also resulted in time lost in trying to find out which key fits which lock, so patients were left waiting for medication.

The Trust needed to find a way to make this process more streamlined and easier for nurses to access keys, while also saving time and costs. The answer was Abloy's PROTEC2 CLIQ system.

To begin with, Scunthorpe Hospital undertook a trial of Abloy's electro-mechanical locking system on one of its wards. This involved specifying and supplying high-security locks and keys, which were fitted to all of the drug cabinets and cupboards as well as padlocks on fridges.

In addition, every nurse on the ward - including bank staff - had their own key, which was individually programmed to allow them access to the specific range of cupboards they needed to unlock.

The PROTEC2 CLIQ technology provided the hospital with added benefits such as quick changing or removal of access rights and collecting audit trails from the Abloy PROTEC2 CLIQ locks, coupled with the ability to easily delete lost or stolen keys from the system ensuring that security remained uncompromised.

Since the trial at Scunthorpe, the system has been rolled out across a number of sites in the UK and is changing the way nurses operate with regards to access of controlled drugs.

Nurses spent significantly less time searching because they only needed one key for all cabinets, instead of a bunch. In addition to this, temporary staff could be granted access only for the time they were on duty. Another benefit was that audit trails logged all access to cabinets and lost keys could be deleted from the system, thereby maintaining security. Because each nurse 'owned' their own key, the security of controlled drugs improved through natural usage of the system and locking of cabinets.



Testimonials

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) recently gave positive feedback on the Abloy PROTEC2 CLIQ solution.

The positive findings from the CQC were featured in a quality report of Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust's Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre in Birmingham², in which the centre gained an overall rating of 'Good', with services at the trust achieving an 'Outstanding' level.

The 'Innovation, Improvement and Sustainability' section of the report states there was a strong innovation of culture at the centre - a case in point being the drug key system on trial on the assessment units, which is Abloy PROTEC2 CLIQ system.

It had been identified that significant nursing time was spent getting access to the drug cupboard key, leading to poor key control and ineffective use of nurse time.

With the implementation of the Abloy PROTEC2 CLIQ system, each member of staff on duty had an electronic key that was linked to them, and provided audit trails and restricted access to certain staff when skills and competencies had not been achieved.

This resulted in less time being spent looking for keys meaning greater nursing efficiency, and improved key control with access rights to certain areas being regulated much more effectively.



Conclusion

With the tremendous amount of pressure that nursing staff find themselves under, streamlining the processes for everyday tasks – such as drug dispensation - can ease the strain and make the ward more effective as a whole.

An area as important as medicine management needs to be addressed correctly, in order to ensure that patients are administered the correct drugs when required by an authorised nurse.

That is why Abloy recommends that all UK healthcare institutions undertake an audit of the current medicine management systems in place and how they are impacting on the efficiency of staff, and ultimately the wellbeing of patients.

Introducing a new key control solution - such as the Abloy PROTEC2 CLIQ system - could make the whole ward more effective and create significant

improvements when it comes to controlling drug administration and serving patient needs.

Further information

If you would like further information about products and services available from Abloy UK, please call 01902 364 500 or email marketing@abloy.co.uk, visit www.abloy.co.uk, or visit the Abloy London Showroom at The Building Centre in London.



About

Abloy UK is the UK's leading expert on high quality door locking and functionality.

Its product range includes electric locking, cylinder, padlocks, door operators and more. Together, the solutions offer secure, compliant and lasting solutions trusted by organisations throughout the UK, Ireland and worldwide, across a variety of industries – wherever compromise is not an option.

Abloy has the capability to offer you a complete security solution; from initial surveys and fact finding, to assessments, problem solving and planning through to specification.

All Abloy staff are friendly, fully engaged and willing to put in that extra commitment to find the correct solution to suit your needs.

Sources and Additional Resources

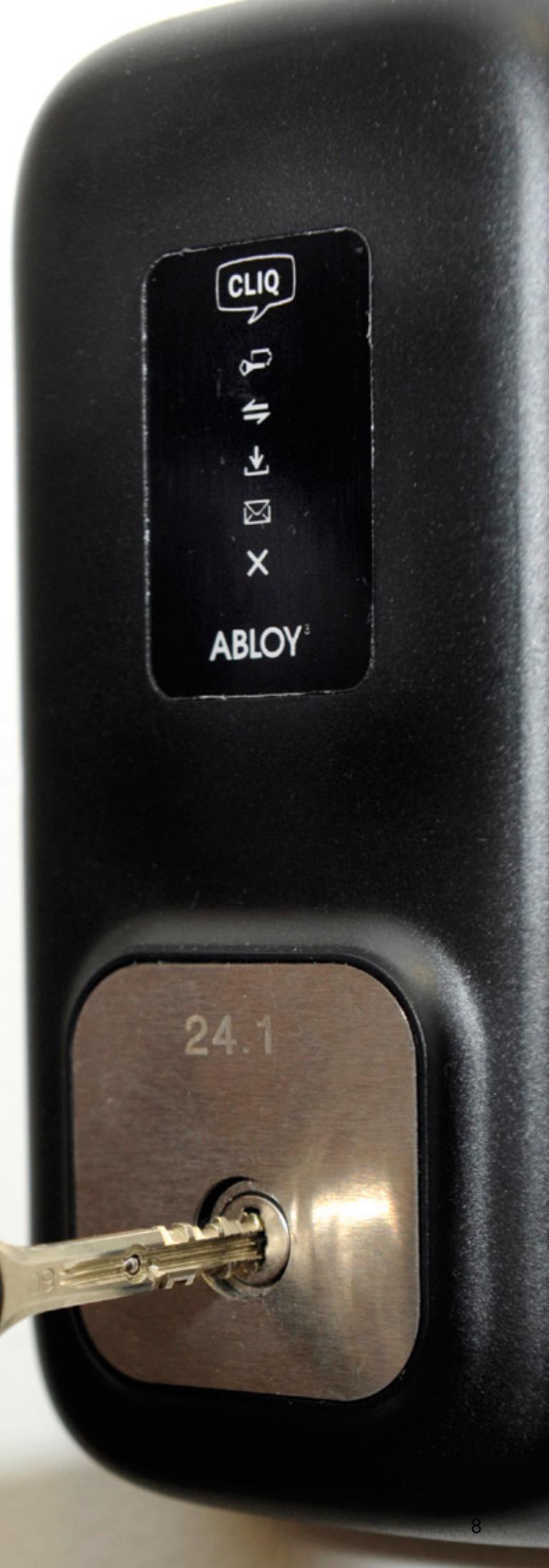
1 – Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Trust, Dept. of Pharmacy

2 - <http://www.cqc.org.uk/location/RRK15>

Interviews can be arranged with Scunthorpe General Hospital on request.

Abloy's video at Scunthorpe: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cMOdAeQfhYo>

BBC Coverage of the system: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v100OMnZzHU>



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