

Community Pharmacy Norfolk & Suffolk (CPNS) Statement on the disposal of Patient Sharps

Community Pharmacy Norfolk & Suffolk (CPNS) is aware that recent changes to local service provision have affected some patients who require disposal of sharps and other clinical waste.

It is important to clarify that community pharmacies are **not required under the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework to accept or dispose of patients' sharps bins or household clinical waste** (including both yellow- and purple-lidded bins). As a result, community pharmacies are generally unable to provide this service unless specific local arrangements have been commissioned.

Where sharps waste is generated by a patient through self-administration at domestic premises, it is classified as household clinical waste under regulation 4 and Schedule 1, paragraph 3, item 12 of the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012. The statutory responsibility for arranging the collection of household waste rests with the relevant waste collection authority under section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Patients who require support with the disposal of sharps or clinical waste should therefore contact their local borough, district, or city council to access the appropriate service and advice.

Improper disposal of sharps and clinical waste can pose a serious risk to public health and safety. Discarded needles and other clinical waste may cause injury to family members, carers, waste collection staff, and members of the public, and increase the risk of infection and environmental contamination. **Sharps bins must never be placed in household waste or recycling bins.** Other clinical waste should be disposed of in accordance with advice from the relevant local authority.

CPNS recognises that changes to these services may cause inconvenience for patients and carers. However, pharmacies can only provide services that are commissioned and supported through the appropriate contractual arrangements.

We would encourage patients to contact their local council directly to discuss available collection and disposal options in their area.