



Durham County Council

Clinical Waste Collection Policy July 2023

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1. Introduction

Durham County Council's Clinical Waste Policy aims to ensure a harmonised collection service is carried out across the county and operates effectively and efficiently. This policy document therefore, is designed to follow agreed policies and procedures that are clearly defined, so as to avoid any uncertainty for residents, council members and officers of the council.

2. Policy

A waste assessment form needs to be completed by the community healthcare worker, practice nurse or GP treating the individual, identifying the following:-

- the waste category
- quantity of waste being produced
- notification of whether the individual is able to leave the house, (for the purpose of assessing sharp collections).

The waste assessment form must be completed and confirmed by the council before collections are required to commence. Collections will not be arranged without receipt of the completed and approved referral form. Please note, the council must be notified if circumstances change, this includes if the individual goes into hospital temporarily or no longer requires the collection service. The council will also carry out reviews of this application every two years in order to ensure accurate details are held. Whilst legislation permits a charge for a clinical waste collection from a domestic property can be made the council do not currently charge for this service. Should this situation change, consultation with relevant bodies would occur.

3. Waste Collection Obligations

Durham County Council has the following obligations:-

- To accept household waste collection requests made by the healthcare professional
- To provide separate waste collections where necessary
- To provide, a sharps collection service if required for people who cannot leave their home and who self-medicate

4. Colour coding for bags and sharps containers

The council have adopted the National Colour Coding Scheme for the disposal of clinical or offensive waste, as stipulated in the Safe Management of Healthcare Waste. The list below details the types of waste and containers collected by the council in:-

Yellow bag - infectious waste from bodily fluids for incineration only.

(Only from the treatment of infectious patients, and those suspected of having an infection)

- Wipes, dressings, bandages (medicated/iodine)
- Incontinence waste
- Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, masks)
- Home dialysis items

Orange bag - infectious waste for treatment at a specialist plant.

(Only from the treatment of soft infectious clinical waste or soft potentially infectious clinical waste)

- Wipes, dressings, bandages
- Swabs
- Personal Protective Equipment (gloves, masks)

Black bag - non-infectious offensive/hygiene waste such as incontinence pads and nappies.

(These items must not have had any contact with infectious materials)

- Incontinence pads
- Catheter bags (emptied)
- Stoma bags (emptied)
- Tubing, peg or stomach feeding equipment.

Items to be double bagged.

Black bags should be used for all general domestic waste.

Yellow sharps container - infectious sharps waste, for incineration only such as needles, hypodermics.

(Only infectious and medically-contaminated waste)

- IV bags, lines and tubing
- Needles and syringes
- Blades
- Scissors Boxes to be stored separately to bags.

Blue lidded recycling bin can be used for packaging material

- Paper, cardboard and cartons
- Plastic bottles and tubs
- Tins, cans and aerosols.

Recycling Box

- Glass bottles and jars (all shapes and colours)

5. Collection Frequency

Collection frequency will be agreed upon application for the clinical waste service and can occur from weekly, fortnightly or monthly. Sharps boxes will only be collected wherever possible from residents who are housebound. The council will specify the collection frequency depending upon the number of sharps boxes required.

Clinical Soft Infectious Waste; This includes; Yellow bag (incineration only) and; Orange bag (infectious waste for treatment at a specialist plant) The Waste Assessment Form should be completed and emailed to the council advising of the need for a regular collection to be set up. The council will advise of the collection frequency available (usually weekly) and will provide yellow / orange bags and ties or a bin (dependent on volumes produced) to ensure the waste is sealed safely and securely. Bags which are not securely tied will not be collected. The council will advise the individual when they receive the referral, of the collection day relevant for their property. The Waste Assessment Form when completed should advise the council if the collection is required on a one-off basis, temporarily whilst the individual recovers from an illness or permanently. It is recommended that a review of the collection list is carried out periodically.

Offensive/Hygiene Waste; Black bag or yellow bag: Non-infectious offensive/hygiene waste can be treated as domestic household waste. This includes incontinence waste, empty stoma or catheter bags. If the quantity is small such as less than half a sack per week or a full sack per fortnight, the waste can be double bagged and disposed of in the individual's own domestic waste bin. However, if the waste is more than half a sack per week and this amount is likely to be produced on regular basis, then the Community Healthcare Worker will need to complete and send off the Waste Assessment Form to the council.

6. Bin Capacity

Upon receiving the Waste Assessment Form, the council will contact the individual to assess whether they can manage the waste within their existing waste collection arrangements. Where this is not possible the council will decide whether to offer one of the following:-

- a larger general waste bin, providing additional capacity for offensive wastes
- an additional bin (refuse and/or recycling)
- or in exceptional circumstances a dedicated separate collection service. For individuals producing large quantities of non-infectious offensive/hygiene waste, the resident will use black bags and must double bag the waste.

In addition an information leaflet will be provided detailing the council's clinical waste collection service.

For individuals producing large quantities of non-infectious offensive/hygiene waste, the resident will use black bags and must double bag the waste.

7. Sharps Waste

Infectious sharps waste: Sharps container This waste should be placed in a yellow 'Sharpsguard' sharps container. These one litre containers are provided upon prescription by the NHS. The council will not provide sharps boxes.

Sharps Waste Produced by Self-Medicating Patients: The full sharps containers should be returned to the individual's own surgery by the patient or their representatives.

Sharps waste produced by housebound patients: A waste assessment form needs to be completed in order to request a collection service. Sharps boxes will only be collected wherever possible from residents who are housebound. The council will specify the collection frequency depending upon the number of sharps boxes required.

8. Medical and Miscellaneous Waste

The council does NOT offer a disposal service for pharmaceutical products or clinical waste generated by treatment with cytotoxic or cytostatic drugs.

These items must be identified as prescribed treatment upon application for the service.