

Date: 11 September 2025
Our ref: K: FOI/Ref: 2025-000261
Email: NSS.DevServicesFOI@nhs.scot

Freedom of Information Reference: FOI-2025-000261 – Sharps clinical waste.

I refer to your freedom of information request that we received on 20 August 2025 requesting the following information.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following centrally held information relating to sharps waste produced by NHS hospitals in Scotland. If any information is only held locally, please confirm this.

1. Classification & segregation

Centrally held guidance on sharps waste streams (e.g., orange, yellow, purple bins), including what types of items or material categories are intended for each stream.

2. EWC / LoW codes

European Waste Catalogue or List of Waste codes for each sharps waste stream.

3. Staff compliance

Information on how the NHS ensures staff correctly segregate sharps waste, including audits, monitoring, training verification, and centrally held reports of non-compliance.

4. Contractor standards & sterilisation

Policies or contracts with waste contractors covering sterilisation validation, handling, traceability, and any monitoring/audit protocols.

5. Incidents / compliance issues

Centrally recorded instances of sharps waste containing non-compliant items in the past 5 years.

6. Waste volume data

Aggregated annual tonnage of sharps waste over the past 3 years, by waste stream if available.

7. Pharmaceutical residues

Centrally held guidance or studies on pharmaceutical residues in sharps waste.

8. Chemical / pharmaceutical composition

If the NHS has ever recorded or tested the pharmaceutical or chemical contents/residues of sharps waste bins, please provide a list of substances identified. If no such information has been recorded or tested, please confirm that no data is held.



Chair Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Mary Morgan

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Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service*

We have now completed the search of our records and can provide you with the following information:

1. Classification & segregation

Centrally held guidance on sharps waste streams (e.g., orange, yellow, purple bins), including what types of items or material categories are intended for each stream.

SHTN03 offers national waste guidance on waste segregation and is publicly available; SHTN 03-01 V8 Dec 2024. National Procurement (NP) part of National Services Scotland (NSS) holds the framework level waste segregation chart that defines the disposal of all healthcare waste. Health Boards (HBs) incorporate this into segregation charts held locally to account for board specific requirements.

2. EWC / LoW codes

European Waste Catalogue or List of Waste codes for each sharps waste stream.

This information is located within SHTN 03-01 V8 Dec 2024 as per the segregation chart.

3. Staff compliance

Information on how the NHS ensures staff correctly segregate sharps waste, including audits, monitoring, training verification, and centrally held reports of non-compliance.

SHTN03 offers national waste guidance and is publicly available SHTN 03-01 V8 Dec 2024. NP as framework managers are not involved in HB specific activities relating to waste segregation and training. All HBs have a Waste Management Officer (WMO) who co-ordinates this activity at HB level. All HBs are required to submit a Pre Assessment Audit (PAA) to our Healthcare Waste Supplier in line with SEPA guidance, this process is managed locally.

4. Contractor standards & sterilisation

Policies or contracts with waste contractors covering sterilisation validation, handling, traceability, and any monitoring/audit protocols.

NP's contract covers the full treatment and safe disposal of all healthcare waste. The process can be found within the SEPA permit publicly available from the SEPA website;
PERMIT CAR ConstructionRunOff DRAFT V04.

5. Incidents / compliance issues

Centrally recorded instances of sharps waste containing non-compliant items in the past 5 years.

Under Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Scotland Act, 2002 (FOISA) an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold it. NSS does not hold the requested information as sharps waste bins are not opened and are sent for incineration. In line with the SEPA guidelines our healthcare waste supplier is not permitted to open any clinical waste bags/containers. I would advise you contact each individual HB who may have information where they have undertaken a waste audit and been permitted to open bags/containers, addresses are as follows:

NHS Ayrshire & Arran
NHS Borders

foi@aaaht.scot.nhs.uk

foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk



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NHS Dumfries & Galloway	dq.feedback2@nhs.scot
NHS Fife	fife.foirequestfife@nhs.scot
NHS Forth Valley	fv.freedomofinformation@nhs.scot
NHS Grampian	gram.foi@nhs.scot
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	foi@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Highland	nhsh.foirequestshighland@nhs.scot
NHS Lanarkshire	foi@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Lothian	foi@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Orkney	ORK.FOIrequests@nhs.scot
NHS Shetland	shet.foi@nhs.scot
NHS Tayside	tay.informationgovernance@nhs.scot
NHS Western Isles	wi.foi-requests@nhs.scot
Healthcare Improvement Scotland	His.foi@nhs.scot
NHS 24	FOI@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Education for Scotland	nes.foi@nhs.scot
NHS Golden Jubilee	FOI@nwtc.scot.nhs.uk
Public Health Scotland	Phs.foi@phs.scot
Scottish Ambulance Service	Make a FOI Request
The State Hospital	TSH.FOI-Mailbox@nhs.scot

6. Waste volume data

Aggregated annual tonnage of sharps waste over the past 3 years, by waste stream if available.

Please find attached Appendix 2 – Waste volume data, which provides annual tonnage of sharps waste from fiscal year 2020/2021 until 2024/2025. Please note that pre 2023/2024 we were in contingency and the data recording was not as detailed as it now is.

7. Pharmaceutical residues

Centrally held guidance or studies on pharmaceutical residues in sharps waste.

Under Section 17 of FOISA an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold it. Technical guidance is not a function of NP as framework manager. I would suggest referring to SHTN 03-01 V8 Dec 2024 or any HB specific policies.

8. Chemical / pharmaceutical composition

If the NHS has ever recorded or tested the pharmaceutical or chemical contents/residues of sharps waste bins, please provide a list of substances identified. If no such information has been recorded or tested, please confirm that no data is held.

Under Section 17 of FOISA an organisation does not have to provide that information if it does not hold it. As framework manager this type of testing is not within NP's remit and would fall to HB WMO's, you may wish to contact the individual HBs for more information.



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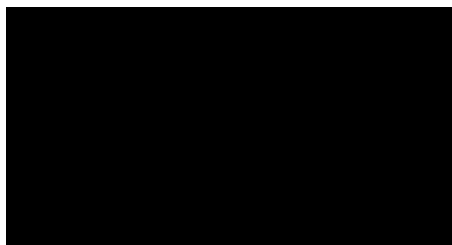
I trust you will find the information of assistance and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of how we have dealt with your request, you can make representations to us asking us to review the handling of your request. Please write to the Associate Director Governance and Board Services (Board Secretary) at the email address nss.foi@nhs.scot within 40 working days of the date of this correspondence.

If after a review you are still unhappy, you also have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at Kinburn Castle, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS, or via their [online application form](#).

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me at the above address.

Yours sincerely,



Chair Keith Redpath
Chief Executive Mary Morgan

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