

COMMUNITY PHARMACY LOCALLY NEGOTIATED SERVICES 2026/27

Service Level Agreement

Provision of Prescribed Sharps Advice and Waste Disposal Service from Community Pharmacy

This agreement is between NHS Lothian and

Pharmacy Contractor

Contractor Code

Developed by	Community Pharmacy Development Team Primary Care Contracts Office NHS Lothian Facilities
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Version 1	December 2024
Version 2	October 2025 + Change to SLA to include 'Advice' + Change pharmacy name to pharmacy contractor on title page + Revise wording to reflect Mandatory CHI on returns 4.1.1 + Revise wording in paragraph 4.1.10 + Reasonable notice to 4.1.11 + Remove section 4.1.13 + Waste medicines Code to 4.2.1 + Add IP statement to 4.3.3 + Pharmacy acts as data controller statement to 4.3.4 + Statement on liabilities para 4.3.5 + Remove section 5.2 + Add Vat statement section 7.4 + Claim Form Appendix 2 & clarify fee payment

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Service Level Agreement (SLA) acts as a contract between NHS Lothian and the contractor and commits the contractor to supply sharps boxes and provide a prescribed sharps advice and waste disposal service as defined below to patients in Lothian for the period April 2026 – March 2027.
- 1.2 The service must be delivered in accordance with General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Professional Standards and Guidance in Good Pharmacy Practice.
- 1.3 Contractors are advised to register for a paragraph 39 exemption to the Waste Management Licensing (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (as amended) – this process is free of charge and involves a simple on-line registration process.
- 1.4 Contractors have a Duty of Care for waste as laid out by the [Scottish Environment Protection Agency](#).

2. Background to service

- 2.1 Pharmacy Contractors are required to accept sharps waste (in appropriate bins) from patients being treated at home or in a homely setting, for uplift and disposal by NHS Lothian facilities services.
- 2.2 Patients who are prescribed medication for which a sharps bin is required to allow safe disposal, should be offered a new sharps waste bin at the point of initial dispensing. Patients who return a full sharps bin should receive an empty bin in return.
- 2.3 Sharps bins will be available at either 2L Purple or 3L Blue size and contractors will request supplies from the facilities team when waste is uplifted.
- 2.4 Contractors are expected to have separate waste arrangements in place for sharps waste generated in the course of their **non-NHS** business (for example waste generated by private vaccination clinics or privately prescribed medications etc). NHS Lothian reserve the rights to request evidence of the contractors' private sharps waste collection service. Contractors will have up to 28 days to provide evidence if requested.
- 2.5 All sites to complete a Pre-acceptance Waste Audit and this needs to be completed annually if producing five tonnes of waste or every five years if producing less than this.

3. Service aims

- 3.1 To provide patients and carers with clear, proactive advice on safe sharps disposal and a robust route for safe disposal of prescribed sharps close to home via community pharmacies in Lothian.
- 3.2 To ensure that patients in NHS Lothian requiring such a service, and healthcare professionals requiring to signpost patients, are aware of and know how to access it.
- 3.3 To deliver the service with the least waste possible and in the most environmentally sustainable way.

4. Service outline and standard

4.1 Contractors will be required to:

- 4.1.1 Provide clear, proactive advice to all patients and carers on safe sharps disposal, including:
- **Sharps Safety:** Explain risks of needlestick injuries and safe handling practices.
 - **Home Storage:** Advise on keeping sharps containers secure and out of reach of children and pets.
 - **Correct Use and Disposal:** Instruct on placing sharps in the container safely, not overfilling, and ensuring the lid is secure.
 - **Disposal Routes:** Inform patients how to return full containers to the pharmacy.
 - **Replacement Containers:** Advise on how to obtain a replacement container.
 - **Incident Response:** Outline actions to take if an injury or spillage occurs.
 - **Tailored Support:** Personalise advice based on patient needs and provide supporting materials where helpful.
- 4.1.2 Ensure that all waste collected within this SLA will meet the requirements of [NHS Lothian waste policy](#) and [SHTN3](#) and is within the categories stated in this agreement.
- 4.1.3 All sharps bins should be:
- No more than 2/3 full
 - Marked with the contractor code
 - Sharps bins must have the fitted label completed identifying who assembled the box and when and who sealed the box.
 - Sharps bins must be sealed and permanently closed.
- 4.1.4 Sharps bins that are returned by patients must include their Community Health Index (CHI) number on the label. This is to ensure complete traceability. If CHI number is unknown, the contractor code & signature should be used. Pharmacy should place patient returned sharps bins into an appropriate storage receptacle. This is to be used as a temporary storage facility. NHS Facilities drivers will transfer the contents of the storage receptacle for transportation.
- 4.1.5 Ensure that all waste presented is Health & Safety compliant by following the information in 4.1.2, 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 and ensuring any cytotoxic waste is clearly labelled.
- 4.1.6 Take action on any notified waste presentation breaches. This may include during a waste pick up or results from audit.
- 4.1.7 Work with NHS Lothian Facilities to ensure collection arrangements are as simple and efficient as possible.
- 4.1.8 Ensure safe and suitable access to waste storage area, and parking is available where possible for Facilities Team and collection vehicle.
- 4.1.9 Where the contractor moves waste bins to one location for collection by NHS Lothian bins must be marked with the information outlined above by the original producer.
- 4.1.10 Ensure an adequate stock of appropriate sizes and colour of bins and lids by liaising with NHS Lothian Facilities at times of waste collection or if large quantity of bins email loth.transportclinicalwasteeng@nhs.scot in advance of collection.
- 4.1.11 Ensure all sharps waste from patients is accepted when presented and disposed of safely and appropriately.

- 4.1.12 Ensure appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are in place (example SOP can be found at Appendix 1. This is an example only, contractors may develop their own SOP) to ensure all pharmacy staff understand their duty of care responsibilities and work within the health & safety requirements, including needle stick injury and access to Occupational Health if required, infection control guidance for handling and storing sharps bins. Pharmacy Contractors should ensure that pharmacy staff maintain knowledge relevant to providing the service to patients and undertake further training if required.
- 4.1.13 Participate in any audit co-ordinated by NHS Lothian. Audits may be undertaken by NHS Lothian annually or five yearly, dependant on the weight of the contractor's waste. Reasonable notice of any audit being undertaken will be given in writing to the contractor not to unreasonably disrupt the contractor's business. Notice will also be sent to the Area Manager / business owner as applicable.
- 4.1.14 Notify NHS Lothian Primary Care Contracts Office (PCCO) of any change in contracted opening hours or any other relevant changes that may affect the collection and delivery of waste materials.
- 4.1.15 Ensure that staff involved in the provision of the service are aware of and operate within the service specification and ensure all staff are trained in the operation of the service.
- 4.1.16 Ensure that they have procedures in place to identify and manage the risks involved in providing and managing prescribing pharmacy services as detailed in GPhC Guidance [In practice: Guidance for pharmacist prescribers \(pharmacyregulation.org\)](#)
- 4.1.17 Have procedures in place to ensure the whole pharmacy team provide safe & effective care and pharmacy services as detailed in the GPhC Guidance for contractors; [Guidance to ensure a safe and effective pharmacy team](#)

4.2 NHS Lothian Facilities Department will be required to:

- 4.2.1 Collect from premises and then dispose of all clinical waste within the categories stated below.
- European Waste Catalogue Code 18-01-03 – Sharps waste
 - European Waste Catalogue Code 18-01-08 – Cytotoxic/Cytostatic Waste
 - European Waste Catalogue Code 18-01-09 – Waste Medicines
- 4.2.2 Collect sharps waste every 4 weeks from contractors and provide this waste uplift service at no charge to community pharmacies subject to accessing premises safely and legally. Catch up collections can be built into the scheduled if required. A schedule of routine uplifts will be provided to contractors.
- 4.2.3 Refuse to collect any waste that does not comply with [NHS Lothian Waste policy](#) and the [Dangerous Goods Legislation and Scottish Health Technical Note \(SHTN\) 3](#).
- 4.2.4 Refuse to collect any waste where the presentation of that waste presents a Health and safety risk to staff. NHS Lothian staff collecting the waste will be the sole arbiters of waste that constitutes a Health & Safety risk.
- 4.2.5 Record as a failed uplift where:
- waste is not correctly presented and likely to be rejected by the National waste contractor.

- parking or access is not available or suitable.

- 4.2.6 Record incidences of waste presentation breaches on our incident management system (Datix) and notify the relevant manager.
- 4.2.7 Supply the Community Pharmacy with sufficient 2L Purple or 3L Blue replacement UN approved containers for patient use. Pharmacy should place patient returned sharps bins into an appropriate storage receptacle. This is to be used as a temporary storage facility. NHS Facilities drivers will transfer the contents of the storage receptacle for transportation.
- 4.2.8 NHS Lothian reserve the right to withdraw the service for an agreed period of time if the number of waste presentation breaches recorded reaches three over a 12-month period or there is a single significant incident whereby there is immediate risk of injury to a member of staff.

Any breaches of waste presentation will be discussed with the contractor on each occasion and a record of correspondence/action plans kept for audit purposes.

Any decision to withdraw the service on grounds of safety would only be undertaken if resolution has not been possible following the above steps. Any such decision will be discussed between NHS Lothian Facilities Manager and the contractor. In such circumstances, the contractor will be responsible for the uplift of sharps waste at their own expense. Once any issues that gave rise to service withdrawal are resolved, the service will be re-instated by mutual agreement.

4.3 Both Parties agree that:

- 4.3.1 The service will be reviewed annually. Any alterations, revisions, or additions to this agreement will be recorded by way of a formal amendment of this SLA.
- 4.3.2 Either NHS Lothian or the contractor giving 12 weeks' notice may terminate this SLA. Written notice should be sent to loth.communitypharmacycontract@nhs.scot
- 4.3.3 All Intellectual Property Rights belonging to a Party prior to the execution of this Agreement shall remain vested in that Party.
- 4.3.4 The Parties agree that in relation to:
- Personal Data processed by the pharmacy contractor in providing Services under this Agreement (for example, patient details, medical history and treatment details), the pharmacy contractor shall be the sole Data Controller; and
 - Personal Data, the processing of which is required by NHS Lothian for the purposes of quality assurance, performance management and contract management NHS Lothian and the pharmacy contractor will be independent Data Controllers;
- 4.3.5 Liability: Neither Party will be liable for indirect or consequential losses, including loss of business or profits. The total liability of the pharmacy contractor to NHS Lothian will be limited to the total Fees paid or payable under the Agreement.

5. Training requirement

- 5.1 All staff members involved in the delivery of pharmaceutical services should have undertaken appropriate training.

5.2 Contractors should ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of this service are aware of their company procedure on managing a needle stick injury. Contractors should ensure the initial below steps are followed:

- Wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and lukewarm water- do not scrub the area
- Gently encourage bleeding- wounds should not be sucked
- Thoroughly irrigate exposed mucous membranes and eyes with water
- Cover with a waterproof plaster e.g. elastoplast if not allergic

5.3 It is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure the service is provided to the required standard and to ensure all staff in the pharmacy have knowledge of and are trained in the operation of the service.

6. Monitoring & evaluation

6.1 Contractors Standard Operating Procedures should be available for all staff to access and should be reviewed every two years or sooner if there are any changes to practice.

6.2 Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians, and support staff involved in the provision of the service should undertake and retain evidence of relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD)/ training.

6.3 Provision of the service will be monitored and audited regularly by NHS Lothian as outlined in 4.1.13.

7 Claims and payment

7.1 Provision of all appropriate bins and disposal of all waste is undertaken and paid for by NHS Lothian.

7.2 A fee of £3 will be paid for each patient sharps waste bin accepted. This fee will also cover the provision of a new empty sharps waste bin at the point of initial dispensing, and provision of an empty sharps waste bin following the return of a full bin. Claims should be submitted on a monthly basis via claim form to the Primary Care Contracts Office (PCCO). Checks will be completed to compare what has been submitted and collected by Facilities team.

7.3 The total funding for this locally negotiated service is fixed. Although careful calculations have been made based on the number of sharps bins returned by patients, there remains a risk that these numbers increase. Activity and spend will be monitored closely throughout the year, but in the unlikely event that total funding has been exhausted then the service will cease with 12 weeks' notice provided.

7.4 The Fees set out in 7.2 are exclusive of any applicable Value Added Tax. Value Added Tax will be charged at the prevailing rate and is payable by NHS Lothian following the receipt of a VAT invoice.

7.5 This provision will be reviewed annually.

8. Contact Details

Facilities Team (For enquires relating to replacement bins and waste collections)
loth.transportclinicalwasteenq@nhs.scot

Primary Care Contracts Office (To update any changes to opening hours of your pharmacy)
loth.communitypharmacycontract@nhs.scot

9. Other useful links:

9.1 Health Facilities Scotland

- Safe Management of Healthcare Waste.
- Scottish Health Technical Note 3 Part B – NHS Scotland Waste Management Guidance: Waste Management Policy Template.
<http://www.hfs.scot.nhs.uk/publications-/>

9.2 Scottish Environment Protection Agency

- Information on the environment and human health protection
- Information on how Scotland's natural resources/services are used as sustainably as possible and contribute to sustainable economic growth.
www.sepa.org.uk

9.3 Community Pharmacy Development

- Information on the NHS Lothian Prescribed Medicines and Sharps Disposal Service available at the Lothian pages of:
<https://www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/>

9.4 Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road

- [ADR 2025 - Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road | UNECE](#)

9.5 National Scotland Service

- <http://www.hfs.scot.nhs.uk/publications-/guidance-publications/?keywords=WASTE§ion=&category=&month=&year=&show=10>

Appendix 1 – Standard Operating Procedure **EXAMPLE**

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Safe Disposal of Sharps – Receiving at *[add location]*

1. Purpose

This procedure outlines the steps to be followed when sharps (such as needles, syringes, lancets, scalpels, and other sharp objects) are received at *[add location]*.

The aim is to ensure the safe, secure, and compliant disposal of sharps to prevent injury, contamination, and environmental hazards.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel responsible for the receipt, handling, and disposal of sharps at *[add location]*

3. Responsibilities

- Reception Desk Staff: Ensure the safe and proper receipt, handling, and documentation of sharps disposal containers.
- Staff have a Duty of Care for waste as laid out by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency¹.
- Ensure that all waste collected meet the requirements of NHS Lothian waste policy² and SHTN3².
- Environmental Services or Waste Management Staff: Proper disposal of sharps containers in accordance with regulatory requirements.

4. Definitions

- **Sharps:** Objects that can puncture or cut the skin, such as needles, syringes, lancets, scalpels, glass, etc.
- **Sharps Disposal Container:** A puncture-resistant, leak-proof container used to safely dispose of sharps.

5. Procedure

5.1 Receiving Sharps at Reception Desk

1) Initial Inspection:

- Ensure that all sharps received at the reception desk are in sealed, labelled, and approved sharps disposal containers.
- Inspect the container to ensure it is not overfilled (no more than 2/3 full) or damaged.
- Verify that the sharps container is securely closed, with no visible spillage or leaks.

2) Documentation:

- Sharps bins must have the fitted label completed identifying who assembled the box and when and who sealed the box.
- Sharps bins must include the Community Health Index (CHI) number on the label (or contractor code and signature if not available) to ensure complete traceability.

3) Supply

- Patients who present with sharps containers for disposal should be offered a new sharps waste bin.
- 2L purple and 4L Blue sharp bins will be available for patient collection.

5.2 Handling Sharps Containers at Reception Desk

1) Never Open or Attempt to Sort Containers:

- Under no circumstances should staff open or attempt to sort the contents of a sharps disposal container.
- If the container is found to be damaged, report it immediately to the waste management team for corrective action.

2) Safe Transfer:

- Place the sharps container in a designated holding area away from high-traffic areas, ensuring it is secure and protected from accidental contact or damage.
- If the container is full or ready for disposal, ensure it is transported safely to the waste management team or designated storage area.

5.3 Disposal Process

The container should be handled with care, placed into an appropriate waste disposal area, and secured until further processing.

1) Transfer to Waste Management:

- Logistics Department will collect sharps bins at regular, scheduled intervals.
- Provide/complete all necessary waste transfer documentation at point of collection.
- Ensure that all waste presented is Health & Safety compliant.
- Work with Logistics department to ensure collection arrangements are as simple and efficient as possible.

2) Stock management

- Ensure adequate stock of appropriate sizes and colour of bins and lids by liaising with NHS Lothian Logistics staff at times of waste collection.

6. Safety Measures

• Avoid Direct Contact with Sharps:

Always handle sharps containers by the outer part of the container and never by the lid.

• Immediate Reporting:

Report any injury or exposure to sharps immediately to the supervisor and seek medical attention.

• Sharps Injury Protocol:

Follow the needle stick injury protocol⁴ if an accidental injury occurs.

7. Training and Awareness

- All staff members involved in receiving, handling, and disposing of sharps should have completed relevant training on handling sharps.
- Review and update training annually or whenever there are changes in procedures or regulations.

8. References

1. [Activities exempt from waste management licensing | Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)
2. [Waste Management – Policy Online](#)
3. [NHSScotland Waste Management Guidance \(SHTN 03-01 ARCHIVED\) | National Services Scotland](#)

9. Revision History

Version 1.0: Initial document creation December 2024

This SOP ensures that sharps are handled safely from the point of receipt at the reception desk through to their final disposal.

Appendix 2 – Sharps Claim Form

SHARPS: MONTHLY REIMBURSEMENT CLAIM FORM

Claims to be emailed to loth.communitypharmacycontract@nhs.scot by the 5th of each month

Please complete all sections marked in GREEN, adding the total number of transactions to cell E9

Contractor code:
 Contractor name:

MONTH:
 YEAR:

<p>A fee of £3 will be paid for each patient sharps waste bin accepted. This fee will also cover the provision of a new empty sharps waste bin at the point of initial dispensing, and provision of an empty sharps waste bin following the return of a full bin</p>	
<p>Total number of transactions claimed for in the month:</p>	