

Reference:	EIR.21495.26
Subject:	Recycling contaminated electrical devices
Date of Request:	2 September 2026

Requested:

1. Can you please provide me with the relevant documents you hold regarding the provision of a domiciliary service for the safe recycling of patient-contaminated electrical devices? E.g. blood glucose sensors.
2. What is the Health Board's policy, procedure and service arrangements regarding the recycling of these items (and other similar devices)?
3. With environmental issues coming to the forefront recently, I would hope that some arrangements would be put in place to recycle all the valuable material elements in the sensor (and other devices that contain such materials). If no such service is in place, why not?
4. Also, my current sharps waste includes various items such as (potentially contaminated) glass phials and plastic containers that could be recycled separately. Has this been considered?
5. Please let me know what senior management is doing about these issues.

Response:

1. Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) has applied an exception under Regulation 6 (1)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), as some of the requested information is accessible by another means. The policy detailed overleaf is available on the UHB's website.

- Policy 258 – Waste Management Policy

A link to the UHB's policies and written control documents webpage is provided below.

[Policies and written control documents - Hywel Dda University Health Board](#)

2. The disposal of patient-contaminated sharps and associated healthcare waste is managed in line with the UHB's Waste Management Policy and Welsh Health Technical Memorandum (WHTM) 07 01 Safe and Sustainable Management of Healthcare Waste. Natural UK is the UHB's commissioned provider for the management of clinical waste, including the yellow sharps bins.
3. The UHB recognises the importance of recycling and resource recovery wherever possible. However, where devices are contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids, infection prevention and public safety requirements must take precedence. Natural UK is currently working with Natural Resources Wales to explore alternative treatment technologies for yellow sharps waste. These developments may, in the future, enable the recovery and recycling of certain materials generated during the treatment process, including metals and some high-grade plastics. However, under current regulatory requirements and treatment arrangements, it is not currently possible to recover materials for reuse or recycling from this waste stream.

4. A dedicated recycling service for contaminated devices is not currently in place due to the regulatory, infection control and health and safety requirements associated with handling potentially infectious healthcare waste. Once these items are placed in a sharp's container, they must be managed as clinical waste due to the risk of injury and infection. As a result, they are treated through approved healthcare waste treatment processes rather than conventional recycling routes. The sharps boxes supplied by Natural UK are made using at least 40% recycled materials.
5. The UHB is committed to reducing waste and maximising resource recovery where safe and legally permissible to do so. Utilising its Waste Management Policy, it applies the waste hierarchy and circular economy principles to promote waste prevention, reuse, recycling and carbon reduction, while maintaining compliance with infection prevention, health and safety, and waste legislation. Waste, recycling and carbon performance are monitored through the UHB's environmental management and sustainability reporting arrangements, with opportunities for improvement reviewed in partnership with contractors, suppliers and NHS Wales stakeholders.

Additionally, NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) has commissioned the development of an All-Wales NHS Waste Management Strategy. The strategy is expected to include national targets and actions relating to waste reduction, recycling, resource efficiency, circular economy principles, sustainable procurement and carbon reduction. The UHB is contributing to this work through national waste management forums and will review its local arrangements to align with the strategy once finalised. In the meantime, healthcare waste will continue to be managed in accordance with the UHB's Waste Management Policy, HTM 07-01 Safe and Sustainable Management of Healthcare Waste, and all applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.