

‘INSPIRE’ Inhaler Recycling Scheme Information Pack

Dear Pharmacist,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our inhaler recycling scheme, without your participation this scheme would not be possible. This document will outline the plans for the scheme as well as include a risk assessment and standard operating procedure. If you have any further questions regarding the scheme, please contact myself at madeline.ohare@nhs.net.

Background

The NHS has pledged an 80% reduction in its carbon footprint by 2032 to achieve its targets in the climate change act. The NHS is responsible for an estimated 4% of the UK's carbon emissions; inhalers and anaesthetics gases contribute to 5% of the NHS carbon footprint. In 2021 1.56 million inhalers were dispensed to patients within the Black Country ICS; of these 62% were pressurised metered dose inhalers (pMDIs) and the remainder were dry powder inhalers (DPIs) or soft mist inhalers (SMIs). Whilst every inhaler has a carbon footprint, pMDIs have a much more significant impact to the environment due to the Hydrofluoroalkane (HFA) propellants which are potent greenhouse gases.

Initiatives to modify inhaler regimes from pMDIs to DPIs or SMIs, where appropriate, are already well established. However, appropriate disposal plays an important part in the overall effort to reduce the impact of inhalers on the environment. The most environmentally friendly way to dispose of used or unwanted inhalers is to return them to a pharmacy for incineration. This is because even when a pMDI is finished there is significant amount of propellant remaining. If this is not incinerated, it will slowly, over time, be released into the atmosphere and contribute to global warming. Incineration thermally degrades HFAs into far less potent greenhouse gases. This scheme takes that one step further by recycling the plastic component of the inhaler.

Scope and Strategy

The INSPIRE scheme is designed to safely and effectively support patients to recycle their empty, unwanted, or out-of-date inhalers by returning them to participating community pharmacies or through the collection points in New Cross Hospital and Cannock Chase Hospital.

- The collection bin will be provided and emptied by the waste and recycling team at The Royal Wolverhampton (RWT) NHS Trust.
- Your pharmacy will be provided with a collection bin by the RWT waste and recycling team.
- You will then be required to place only the returned inhalers in the bin provided and prevent, where possible, other waste being put into the collection bin.
- A generic email address for the waste and recycling team should be contacted when the bin is $\frac{3}{4}$ full to request collection.
- The waste and recycling team will then visit the pharmacy remove the clear plastic sack and inspect for contamination before removing it. A replacement clear plastic sack will be placed into the collection bin.
- RWT will provide promotional materials in the form of posters and dispensing stickers. We request your participation in promotion and in-pharmacy awareness of the service to patients.
- To conform with waste regulations, we request you to will sign an annual waste transfer notice on delivery of the bin, and this will be renewed each year. The waste transfer note must be kept by the pharmacy for 2 years from the date of issue.

Evaluation of the scheme

- The collection bins will be delivered to the participating pharmacies and the RWT sites approximately one month before the launch of the scheme.
- The returned inhalers will be collected as outlined above and the waste weighed by the waste and recycling team.
- This process will then be repeated once the scheme has been fully launched and advertised to the public. This will enable us to determine the success and engagement of the scheme.

Timeline and next steps

- Recycling bins for participating community pharmacies ordered by RWT sustainability team.
- Signage for recycling bins ordered from Sedgley Signs and affixed to bins by RWT waste and recycling team.
- Dispensing stickers for all prescriptions containing inhalers ordered from BC signs by RWT
- Recycling bins delivered to community pharmacies.
- Recognising the pressure community pharmacies are operating under and your willingness to support this project, there will be a one off £400 set up fee paid to you.
- This will be paid after the first collection of the recyclable materials by the New Cross team and will be subject to satisfactory segregation of waste from the first bin collection. There will need to be an invoice supplied from you to support the payment - details will follow.

Supporting documents

- Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the attached documents. Any queries or comments can be fed back to madeline.ohare@nhs.net