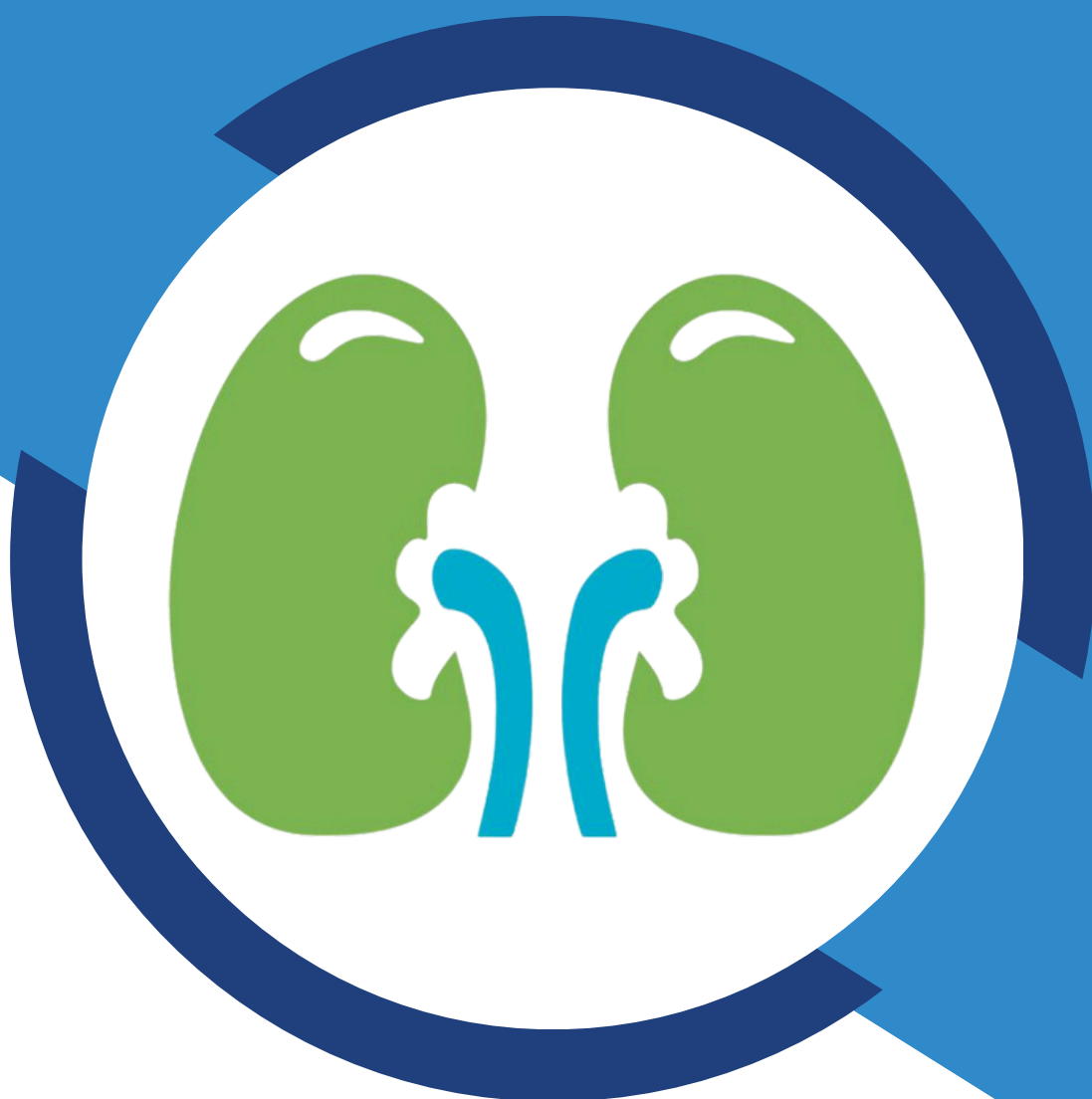


# How-to Guide

## Waste Segregation in Kidney Centres



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UK Kidney Association

# How-to Guide: Waste Segregation in Kidney Centres

**Project:** Sustainable Kidney Care – Implementing Best Practice

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*Although this guide has been developed by experts in sustainability and sustainable kidney care, local teams should use their discretion in its implementation according to local context and requirements*



## Introduction

Effective waste segregation is critical in kidney centres to uphold infection prevention standards, protect staff and patients, and reduce environmental impact. With the NHS **committed to becoming the world's first net-zero health system by 2040**, every correctly sorted waste item helps move kidney care toward sustainability (NHS England, 2024).

This guide provides practical, updated steps for staff in UK kidney centres to implement effective waste segregation in line with:

- **HTM 07-01:** Safe Management of Healthcare Waste (Department of Health, 2023)
- [Health Technical Memorandum 07-01: Safe and sustainable management of healthcare waste](#)
- **NHS England Clinical Waste Strategy (2023),**
- **Greener NHS Supply Chain Roadmap (2023),**
- **NHSE Net Zero Supplier Roadmap (April 2024).**

Effective waste management supports legal compliance, cost savings, environmental goals, and contributes to delivering high-quality, low-carbon kidney care.

# Know Your Waste Streams

Understanding waste classifications is essential for safe and sustainable practice. Colour coding must be strictly followed:

## Bags



**Orange Bags:** *Infectious clinical waste*

*Examples:* Blood-contaminated gauze, used PPE with body fluids.

**Yellow Bags:** *Highly infectious or medicinally contaminated waste*

*Examples:* Heparin syringes, dialysate spills with drug residues.



**Tiger Stripe Bags:** *Offensive (non-infectious) waste*

*Examples:* Hygiene waste, incontinence pads not contaminated with blood.

**Black Bags:** *Domestic/general waste*

*Examples:* Clean wrappers, paper towels (if not contaminated), outer packaging.



## Sharps Bins



**Yellow lid:** Sharps with medicine contamination.



**Orange lid:** Sharps without medicines.



**Blue Bins:** *Pharmaceutical waste* (e.g. expired/unused medicines, empty medicine vials).

## Recycling



**Clear Bags/Bins:** cardboard boxes, clean plastic containers (e.g., dialysate bottles where accepted by local providers).

**Note:** Each Trust may vary slightly in policy based on waste contractor agreements. Always refer to local waste policies and consult your Facilities or Estates lead.

# Set Up Your Dialysis Unit

A well-designed waste station promotes compliance and reduces errors:

- Provide **clearly labelled** bins at or near each dialysis station:
- Orange (clinical infectious)
- Black (domestic)
- Sharps (with appropriate lids)
- Blue (pharmaceutical)
- Recycling (if available)
- Use **foot-operated, hands-free bins** to reduce contact risk.
- Ensure **frequent emptying** and restocking of liners and labels.
- Display **laminated signage** (e.g., NHS Property Services posters) near each bin station.
- Include bins in all patient zones, prep areas, and staff-only areas to encourage correct segregation from start to finish.

## Embedding Waste Segregation into Daily Workflow

### Before Dialysis

- Strip outer packaging from consumables and place in **black or recycling** bins if clean.
- Prepare correct **sharps bins** and liners at point of use.



## During Dialysis



**Infectious waste** (e.g., blood-contaminated items) → Orange bag.

**Patient domestic waste** (e.g., food wrappers) → Black bag.



**Sharps** (e.g., needles, lancets) → Sharps bins immediately.

**Drug-contaminated waste** → Yellow bag or blue bin, depending on content.



## After Dialysis



**Used dialysers/tubing** with blood → Orange bags.

**Drained plastic dialysate containers** → Recycling (if clean and allowed).



**Wipes** → Domestic or offensive (tiger bag), depending on contamination.

Adopt a "**one item, one decision**" approach—assess and dispose of each item as you go.

## Staff Training and Engagement

- Include waste segregation in **mandatory induction and annual refreshers**.
- Use **visual aids, team huddles, and quizzes** to maintain awareness.
- Nominate a "**Green Champion**" or **Waste Champion** in each unit to:
  - Monitor compliance
  - Support peer training
  - Liaise with Estates and Infection Prevention Control (IPC)

Encourage staff feedback to identify barriers to good practice.

## Audit and Continuous Improvement

- Conduct **quarterly waste audits** in line with [HTM 07-01 P99](#)
- Use Trust's **waste management dashboard** to track waste volumes per patient or treatment session.
- Monitor for:
  - Incorrect segregation (e.g., sharps in bags)
  - Overflowing or unlabelled bins
- Share findings and recognise high-performing teams.
- Collaborate with **Estates, Facilities, IPC, and Green Plan teams** to respond to audit findings.

## Sustainability and Safety: Health and safety first

- Always wear gloves and PPE when handling waste.
- Never overfill or hand-tie bags—use the “**swan neck**” method.
- Store sealed waste bags in designated secure hold areas.
- Dispose of sharps in rigid bins only, never in soft bags.

## Contribute to Greener NHS Goals

- Prioritise **recyclable packaging** and reuse where safe.
- Reduce unnecessary single-use items, in line with the **[NHS Plastics Pledge](#)**.
- Digitise patient documentation to reduce paper waste.

- Work with suppliers meeting **NHS Net Zero Supplier Roadmap** criteria including waste-conscious procurement.
- These efforts support the **NHS Net zero Supplier Roadmap**, which mandates sustainable materials, reduced packaging, and lifecycle emissions reporting from all medical suppliers.



## Summary Checklist

- ☐ Use correct **colour-coded bags and bins**
- ☐ Position and label bins for easy access
- ☐ Embed waste segregation in daily routines
- ☐ Train and refresh all staff annually
- ☐ Audit and monitor regularly
- ☐ Follow all **infection control and H&S protocols**
- ☐ Engage in NHS sustainability goals
- ☐ Collaborate with Estates and Greener NHS teams



# References

- Department of Health (2023). *HTM 07-01: Safe and Sustainable Management of Healthcare Waste*
- NHS England (2023). *NHS Clinical Waste Strategy*
- NHS England (2024). *Net Zero Supplier Roadmap*
- Greener NHS (2023). *Supply Chain Roadmap to Net Zero*
- DEFRA (2023). *Greenhouse Gas Reporting: Conversion Factors*
- UKHSA (2022). *Infection Prevention and Control Manual*
- Royal College of Nursing (2014). *Waste Management in Health and Social Care*

For Trust-specific materials, refer to your local **Waste Management Policy**, Estates lead, or **NHS Property Services** for posters and training assets.