

Clinical waste survey 2016



REPORT OF THE CLINICAL WASTE SURVEY 2016

INTRODUCTION

The Clinical Waste Survey 2016 was conducted by the Local Government Association's Research and Information team between 1st September and 27th September 2016 to gather information about how local authorities were dealing with the collection and disposal of clinical waste. This is in the context of NHS plans to re-tender its own clinical waste services which are likely to affect what it is willing to collect in the future, and hence also affect demand on clinical waste services provided by local authorities.

The survey was sent to all 353 local authorities in England. A total of 114 responses were received, though they cover a total of 121 local authorities as two responses covered several authorities. This equates to a response rate of 34 per cent as shown in the table below:

Type of authority	Number of respondents		Response rate	
	Count	Per cent		
Counties	9	33%		
London boroughs	9	27%		
Metropolitan districts	14	39%		
Shire districts	71	35%		
Unitaries	18	32%		
Total	121	34%		

General notes

1. Given the response rate of around a third, the results should be taken to be broadly indicative, rather than fully representative, of the views of authorities as a whole. It should be borne in mind that response varied by type of authority and by region, (the latter between 25 per cent and 40 per cent). Because of the actual number of respondents, results are not broken down by type of authority or region.
2. Further to note 1, not all users answered, or were required to answer, every question, so the response to individual questions varies. In each table, the 'Total' row indicates the total number of respondents to the question, but note that this includes those who answered 'don't know'.
3. All remaining tables are based on the 114 responses rather than 121 authorities referred to above.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The main findings were as follows:

Current collection of clinical waste from residents' homes

- Around three-quarters of respondents (76 per cent) currently collected clinical waste from residents' homes. (**Table 1**)
- Around a half (51 per cent) of those authorities currently collecting clinical waste from residents' homes had contracted out the service, just over a third (38 per cent) directly commissioned it, 4 per cent used another council's service, and 7 per cent had another arrangement in place. (**Table 2**)

Costs of collection and disposal of clinical waste

- A total of 55 respondents were able to quantify the cost of collecting clinical waste from residents' homes in 2015/16. The total amounted to £2.3m, equating to a mean figure of £42,000. The median cost was £26,000. The highest figure for an individual respondent authority was £500,000. (**Table 3**)
- A total of 48 respondents were able to quantify the cost of disposing of clinical waste from residents' homes in 2015/16. The total amounted to £0.9m, equating to a mean figure of £19,000. The median cost was £1,000. The highest figure for an individual respondent authority was £500,000. (**Table 3**)
- Forty-three authorities were able to provide both collection and disposal costs. The total of both was £2.7m, around two-thirds of which (68 per cent) was accounted for by collection overall although this proportion was lower in counties and single-tier authorities (60 per cent) and higher in shire districts (85 per cent).

Charges for collection of clinical waste

- Only five per cent of respondents authorities currently collecting clinical waste from residents' homes charged for collection in 2015/16. Only one authority was able to provide a figure for income. (**Table 4**)

Collection of clinical waste from places other than residents' homes

- Most respondents did not currently collect clinical waste from anywhere other than residents' homes. This proportion varied between 68 per cent for nursing homes and 89 per cent for doctors' surgeries. (**Table 5**)
- Most authorities which did collect such waste charged for it, the proportion varying between 76 per cent (of those collecting) for 'other' places and 90 per cent for clinics. (Note: 'other' places included tattooists/beauty parlours, chemists/pharmacists, schools, residential homes, community centres and needle exchanges.) (**Table 5**)

TABLES

Table 1: does your authority currently collect clinical waste from residents' homes?

	Number	Per cent
Yes	83	76%
No	24	22%
Don't know	2	2%
Total	109	100%

Table 2: please describe how your authority's clinical waste collection service operates.

	Number	Per cent
We directly commission the service	31	38%
We contract out the service	42	51%
We use another council's service	3	4%
Other arrangement	6	7%
Total	82	100%

Table 3: cost of collecting and disposing of clinical waste from residents' homes in 2015/16

(£ nearest thousand)	Counties and single-tier authorities	Shire districts	All authorities
Collection cost			
Minimum amount	£5,000	£0	£0
Maximum amount	£500,000	£81,000	£500,000
Average (mean) amount	£80,000	£25,000	£42,000
Average (median) amount	£50,000	£20,000	£26,000
Total amount	£1,362,000	£962,000	£2,324,000
Base (number of respondents)	17	38	55
Disposal cost			
Minimum amount	£0	£0	£0
Maximum amount	£500,000	£27,000	£500,000
Average (mean) amount	£53,000	£4,000	£19,000
Average (median) amount	£13,000	£0	£1,000
Total amount	£794,000	£124,000	£918,000
Base (number of respondents)	15	33	48

Note: in shire districts, disposal costs are generally covered by the county so the figures above may not reflect actual costs borne by districts.

Table 4: did your authority charge for collecting clinical waste from residents' homes in 2015/16?

	Number	Per cent
Yes	4	5%
No	77	94%
Don't know	1	1%
Total	82	100%

Table 5: does your authority currently collect clinical waste from anywhere other than residents' homes?

Doctors' surgeries	Number	Per cent
Yes, we collect and charge	8	10%
Yes, we collect but do not charge	1	1%
No, we do not collect	70	89%
Total	79	100%
Clinics		
Yes, we collect and charge	9	12%
Yes, we collect but do not charge	1	1%
No, we do not collect	68	87%
Total	78	100%
Nursing homes		
Yes, we collect and charge	21	26%
Yes, we collect but do not charge	5	6%
No, we do not collect	55	68%
Total	81	100%
Other		
Yes, we collect and charge	13	22%
Yes, we collect but do not charge	4	7%
No, we do not collect	41	71%
Total	58	100%



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