

Walking aid return and reuse

Planning support pack

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Introduction

This pack is designed to support NHS organisations and key partners (e.g. adult social care, local authorities) with setting up Recycle and Reuse schemes to promote the return and reuse of walking aids.

Why is this important?

Climate change is a health emergency. If the NHS is to deliver on the ambition of the long-term-plan, improving health now and for future generations, it must tackle its contribution to climate change. That's why the NHS became the world's first health system to commit to reaching net zero carbon, including for emissions in its supply chain, by 2045. Device reuse and refurbishment is one of the operational interventions to reach a net zero NHS supply chain. Walking aids, such as walking sticks, frames, rollators and crutches, can be safely refurbished and reused repeatedly, reducing carbon emissions and waste to landfill and saving money. For example, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust saved £25,000 by achieving a 40% return rate. Increasing return and reuse of walking aids can also improve supply chain resilience, reducing the risk of equipment shortages which can negatively impact patient care and hospital discharges. Well-designed schemes are convenient for patients and a positive way to involve local communities in our efforts to reach net zero carbon.

Who is this for?

This pack is aimed at NHS staff involved in the procurement and prescription of walking aids, together with professionals at local, ICS or regional level whose roles cross-cut sustainability, clinical care, estates, facilities and procurement. It will help you kick start a new scheme or raise awareness of existing schemes and boost your return rate.

Resources available:

- [Walking Aids How-to Guide](#)- Guidance to get started or improve existing schemes.
- [Carbon Calculator and Reporting Tool](#) - Measure and understand your success.
- [10 Reasons Why Article](#) - Kick start conversations with your colleagues.

Download these from the [FuturesNHS Hub](#). For access, contact nhsi.proctom@nhs.net.

Coming soon - Communications toolkit

To help make life easier for any participating trust and support operations, look out for pre-prepared posters, bin labels and copy templates.

Supporting events

National Recycle Week is taking place **19th - 25th September 2022**. Participating in this week of activity is a good opportunity to start or boost a Return and Reuse scheme. There are monthly **Microsoft Teams drop-in sessions** to support you, **12-1 pm on 18 July, 15 August and 5 September**. For more information please contact england.ptomsustainability@nhs.net

Maturity Matrix

You should base your plans according to your local needs, for example whether you are setting up a new scheme from scratch or seeking to boost existing return rates. Considerations should be given, such as how established is the current scheme and whether the scheme is run in-house or provided by a third party supplier.

The core aim is to increase returns, refurbishment and reuse rates. Use the maturity matrix below as a guide to determine what level is best suited to your organisation or ICS.

NHS organisations can find more information about how to set up different types of return and reuse schemes by reading our [Walking Aids How-to Guide](#).

Considerations



- Working with a wider range of partners can provide more consistent key messages and communications to a wider audience.
- More drop-off locations can make returns more convenient for patients.

	Partnership working	Drop off locations	Communications
Level 1	Work with trust stakeholders and/or existing third party supplier	Use existing drop off locations or establish 1-2 drop off locations at main site	Comms team to use copy templates to promote locally
Level 2	ICS-wide approach, link up with adult social care and local authority	Additional drop off locations across multiple sites/trusts	Joint promotion across ICS and local authority
Level 3	Link up with other stakeholders e.g. charity shops/ supermarkets	Additional drop off locations across acute, community and commercial sites	Joint promotion with commercial partners

Planning timeline

Use this as a guide for mapping out key milestones and deliverables

	June/July	July	August	Early Sept	National Recycle Week 19-25 Sept
Internal Engagement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree cleaning process / SOP with clinical teams, infection prevent control (IPC) and Estates / housekeeping Engage wider clinical and admin team in relevant departments e.g. main reception, security, A&E 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust wide comms - e.g. bulletins, intranet, FAQs, Q&A sessions Ensure posters are visible and available across all key sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued promotion: screen savers, staff briefings, trust-wide email, posters Targeted reminders with physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry, main reception and switchboard
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign lead(s) First meeting Agree dates Discuss drop off, on-site collection and storage Discuss cleaning IPC requirements Start media/comms plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree collection method (bins/cage) Agree drop off sites Agree cleaning - e.g. physio assistants, volunteers, housekeeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree storage locations Discuss data and tracking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order extra component parts e.g. ferrules, wipes Deploy bins/cages to drop-off points with national branding labels Set up storage and cleaning locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefing meeting for all involved Assign key contacts for troubleshooting Data tracking De-brief meeting for all involved
External Communication		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send drop-off locations for post-code checker to NHSEI Link with local partners e.g. local authority, waste and recycling centres, charity shops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order printing of posters and bin labels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal trust-wide comms Comms/media team to support internal engagement and to help get the message out locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media content Social media content

What next?

- Study/review your success using the [reporting tool](#), 'how many items were returned?'
- Reflect on and capture what went well, what could be improved, lessons learned.
- Plan how to incorporate these learnings into your everyday return and reuse scheme.



PDCA Cycle

Planning Checklist

Executive sponsor:

Nominated lead(s):

Dates (e.g. 19-25 September):



A great opportunity to promote your scheme is during WRAP and Recycle Now's [National Recycle Week, 19th - 25th September 2022](#)

Engagement

- Nominate lead(s)
- Engage Allied Health Professional and Operational leadership
- Engage Infection Prevention Control (IPC)
- Engage Procurement team
- Engage Estates and Waste Lead / Sustainability team
- Engage third party supplier (if applicable)
- Engage Communications/Media team
- Engage Volunteering team (if applicable)
- Link with local authority and local waste / recycling sites (if applicable)
- Raise awareness to local charity shops (if applicable)
- Notify emergency department and main entrance staff

Logistics

- Set up kick-off meeting
- Review / develop cleaning and refurbishment process - agree with IPC
- Define reporting processes using the NHSEI carbon calculator and reporting tool
- Order extra component parts
- Identify drop off locations
- Identify storage space e.g. cupboard, shipping container
- Identify bins/cages/containers
- Agree collection days/times
- Agree cleaning days/times
- Send drop off location details to england.ptomsustainability@nhs.net for upload to the RecycleNow's online postcode locator

Drop off locations to be added to WRAP/Recycle now postcode checker:

How to Track Impact

Using both the carbon calculator and reporting tool, you can track your reuse rates and carbon savings and model projected performance - download the [reporting tool](#).

Need help using the tool? Contact england.ptomsustainability@nhs.net.

Demonstrating impact:

- **Step 1:** Collect returns data for at least one month prior to your activity. This can be as basic as number of walking aids returned and number of aids suitable for reuse.
- **Step 2:** Collect the same data throughout.
- **Step 3:** Compare before and after datasets to identify success on return and reuse rates.
- **Step 4:** Study the data as part of the review or PDSA cycle process (see page 5) to identify any further improvements you can make to your return and reuse scheme.

Example of carbon calculator

Reporting return rates for a selected quarter

Enter financial year for the period you are reporting on in table below 2022/2023

Enter which quarter you are reporting on in table below Q1 Apr-June

Walking aid type	Devices Issued ¹	Devices returned	Devices refurbished		New Walking aid carbon footprint [kg CO2e]	Disinfection carbon footprint [kg CO2e] ²	Parts carbon footprint [kg CO2e] ³	Transport footprint [kg CO2e]	Carbon emissions reduction through reuse [kg CO2e]
			Passed checks for reuse	Parts replaced					
Large: wheelchairs									
steel	1	0	0	0	32.12	0.48	9.84	0.00	0
aluminium	1	0	0	0	55.28	0.48	9.84	0.00	0
Medium: walkers									
steel	1	1	1	1	11.56	0.32	0.57	0.00	11
aluminium	130	105	88	0	31.12	0.32	0.57	0.00	2,710
Small: crutches									
steel	1	0	0	0	3.25	0.16	0.29	0.00	0
aluminium	250	63	41	0	8.04	0.16	0.29	0.00	323
Small: walking sticks									
aluminium	8	5	5	5	2.19	0.08	0.14	0.00	10
Any: if not tracked individually / listed above									
any walking aid	1		0	0	20.51	0.29	3.08	0.00	0
TOTAL	393	174	135	6					
								TOTAL kg CO2e	3,054
								TOTAL Tonnes CO2e	3.05

Return rate	44%	of all aids issued
Reuse rate	78%	of all aids returned
Refurbishment rate	3%	of all aids returned
Recycling rate⁴	22%	of all aids returned

Notes:

1. Use purchase order data, where devices issued is not available. Note data type when reporting to avoid incorrect comparison/ benchmarking, and seek to capture items issued data.
2. Assumes only returned walking aids are disinfected.
3. Parts replacement covers rubber feet (ferrules) only
3. Assumes that all returned devices that do not pass checks for reuse are recycled.

Postcode Locator

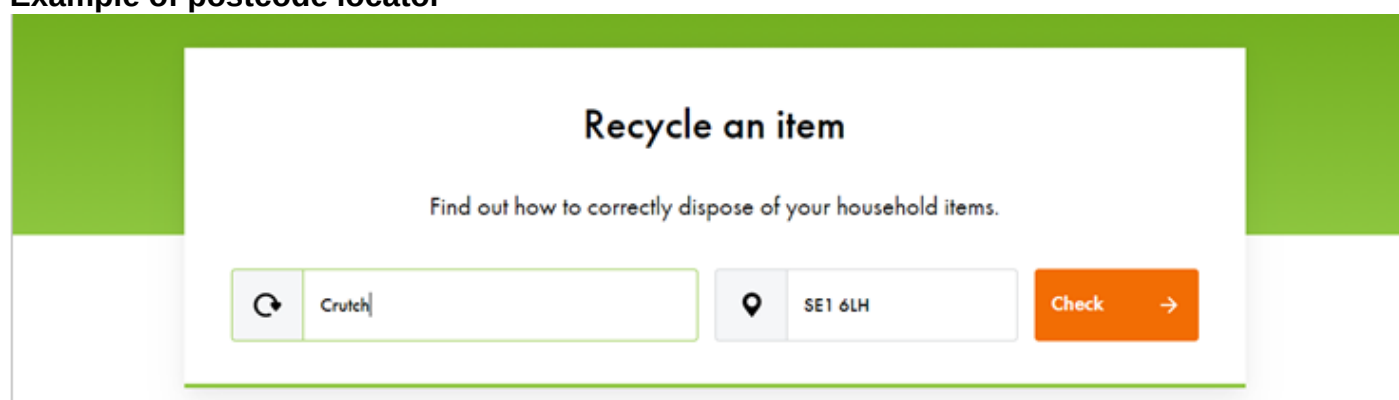
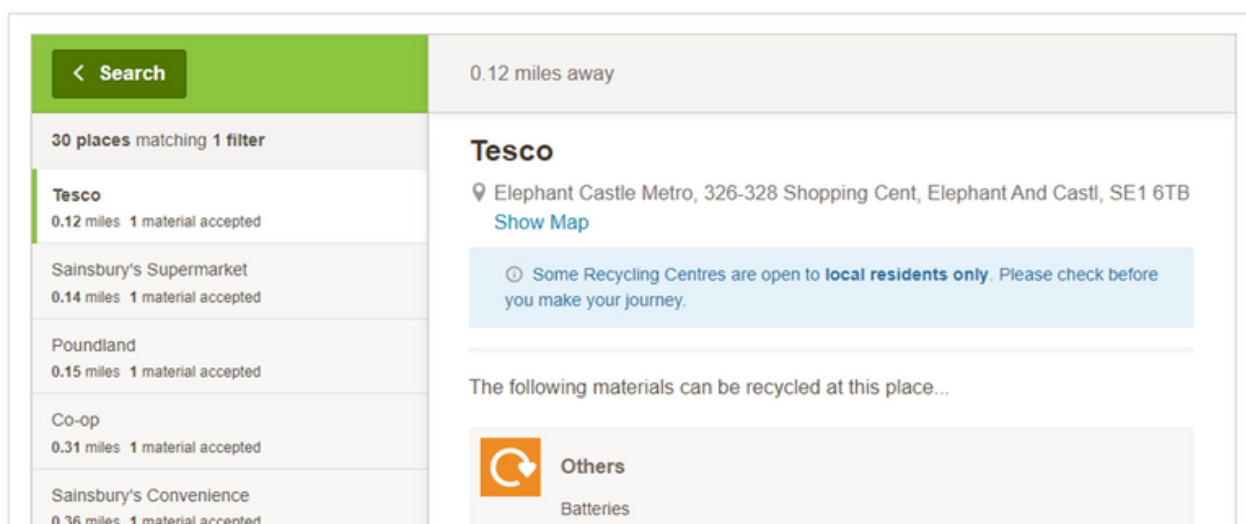
WRAP is charity working with governments, businesses and citizens to create a world where resources are sourced and used sustainably. WRAP's RecycleNow tool is the national recycling campaign for England and Northern Ireland. The tool helps service users to check where they can return walking aids at locally determined drop off locations. A [Microsoft \(MS\) Forms](#) has been generated for you to submit drop off your locations.


Need help with the data fields? Contact england.ptomsustainability@nhs.net

Process to add locations:

- **Step 1:** Complete the [MS Forms Postcode Tracker](#)
- **Step 2:** Sustainable Procurement Team checks submitted form for any errors
- **Step 3:** Sustainable Procurement Team periodically submits data to WRAP
- **Step 4:** WRAP uploads details to the Recycle Now website
- **Step 5:** Complete - Drop off locations are searchable via postcode locator site.

Example of postcode locator

Search	0.12 miles away
30 places matching 1 filter	
Tesco 0.12 miles 1 material accepted	Tesco Elephant Castle Metro, 326-328 Shopping Cent, Elephant And Castl, SE1 6TB Show Map
Sainsbury's Supermarket 0.14 miles 1 material accepted	ⓘ Some Recycling Centres are open to local residents only . Please check before you make your journey.
Poundland 0.15 miles 1 material accepted	The following materials can be recycled at this place...
Co-op 0.31 miles 1 material accepted	 Others Batteries
Sainsbury's Convenience 0.36 miles 1 material accepted	

Return and Reuse FAQs

What storage is needed?

1

Storage requirements will vary and promotional activity will lead to a temporary increase in returns. Some trusts have indicated they need storage similar to the size of a shipping container, however storage solutions can range from a temporary curtained-off bay, to centralised storage and cleaning at one site within the trust where there is more space. There are a number of ways to source additional storage, such as linking up with the local Estates or Property Services team. Where space is limited, contact the local authority or local waste and recycling centre to discuss temporary storage options.

What if other types of equipment are returned?

2

Patients may return different types of equipment, some of which may not be walking aids and may not belong to the trust. The trust can decide how explicit it needs to be when sending out communications. It is recommended the nominated lead or communications team contact the local authority and local community equipment services to agree joint messaging and a process for managing unwanted equipment returns.

What is the best way to track reuse rates and carbon savings?

3

Start collecting returns data at least one month in advance. If there is no tracking system in place, simply count the number of aids returned and assessed as suitable for reuse. The [carbon calculator and reporting tool](#) can support data collection throughout and for ongoing schemes.

How do we ensure there is ownership?

4

Appoint a named lead with the responsibility of oversight and co-ordination. It may be beneficial to appoint joint leads e.g. Allied Health Professional lead and a lead from sustainability, waste or estates teams.

Refurbishing a device inhouse is quick and easy

5

Case studies indicate that with a clear procedure and training in place, refurbishment of a device can be completed in 5-10 minutes by non-clinical staff, freeing up time of clinical staff to treat patients.

What should we do with equipment that is not fit for purpose?

6

Defective walking aids can be recycled as scrap metal, generating income for your trust. More importantly, a returned walking aid that is defective can be taken out of circulation, improving patient safety, thereby reducing the risk of injury and added cost to the NHS. See page 16 of the [Walking aids how-to guide](#).

Where is the best place to get replacement parts?

7

Replacement ferrules and wheels can be purchased through the [NHS SC Framework - Aids for Daily Living](#) to use for refurbishment.

How can we upload our drop off locations to the WRAP post code checker?

8

NHSEI is working with WRAP to develop a post code checker with details of drop off locations to their RecycleNow website. Trusts will need fill out this [Microsoft Form](#) or contact england.ptomsustainability@nhs.net to submit the address details of each drop off location. Once the details have been uploaded to the RecycleNow website, the drop off locations will be visible for patients and staff to check.

What is the best way to get the message out?

9

Nominated leads should work closely with local communications and media team to develop internal and external communications and can draw upon resources in the communications toolkit.

What is the best way to approach this at an ICS?

10

ICS level participation is a great opportunity for a collaborative approach. It can enable more flexibility for managing returns, increase the pool of convenient drop off locations and ensure consistent messaging to a broader population. Where ICS or regional leadership aim to co-ordinate, link with key stakeholders at each organisation to ensure named leads are appointed. Local working groups can feed into a larger ICS steering group to provide support and troubleshooting common challenges.

Local Contacts List

Keep track of key contacts and stakeholders:

Role/Team	Name(s)	Email/Tel
AHP lead		
Ops Lead / Service Manager		
Sustainability Lead		
Communications/Media team		
Infection Prevention Control		
Emergency Department team		
Estates and Facilities		
Local Authority contact		
Local waste and recycling centre contact		
Volunteering team		
Main reception and security		
Switchboard		