



Office of the National Director of Procurement
Health Service Executive
Dr. Steevens' Hospital
Dublin 8
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Oifig an Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Soláthair
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
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Deputy Pádraig O'Sullivan,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
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RE PQ 22616/23

Question

To ask the Minister for Health following the recent pandemic, the health system saw the usage of PPE soar beyond anything the State has ever experienced; the vast majority of this involved single use plastics; in light of the Single Use Plastics Directive 2019 can you inform me the actions that are being taken by the HSE to reduce single use plastics such as PPE in the system; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Response

Deputy O'Sullivan,

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The HSE has taken a number of steps in relation to the Single Use Plastics Directive 2019. All HSE tenders have to include green or sustainability in either the Selection Criteria, the award Criteria or both, based on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Green Public Procurement Guidance.

Disposable Catering Consumables

The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) is responsible for the procurement of common goods and services, which are widely used by the public service organisations including Health.

The OGP who manages these procurement processes on behalf the HSE.

The current HSE contract for Disposable Catering Consumables must be sustainable or recyclable, made of either recyclable plastic or compostable material; except where not generally recyclable - catering films for example.

Medical Consumables

Most medical consumable products are single use medical surgical products for infection control reasons.

Surgical Gowns and drapes are currently all disposable. The HSE are always seeking to source sustainable products and the HSE have been offered of late is a disposable apron (PPE) made of compostable plastic.

Beds & Mattresses

For the current Beds & Mattresses contract, polyurethane foam mattresses accounted for virtually 100% of the market for mattresses used in the community and in hospitals with an approximate spend in 2019 of €827,014 including VAT.

While foam mattresses have and continue to serve well, their environmental impact is significant. Wastage of these mattresses in the community environment is estimated at 60 %. In one site, each week 200 foam mattresses are presented for decontamination of which 120 need to be destroyed. Each foam mattress typically costs €180.

HSE Procurement has identified the non-foam mesh mattress as a key innovation in reducing waste, cost and risk. A special lot was created in HSE's Beds & Mattresses 2022 awarded tender to facilitate its entry into the marketplace.

It is envisaged that the non-foam mesh mattress will become increasingly important in all areas of usage. Initially, however, the likely greatest area of usage will be in the community (ie domestic setting where people are provided with mattresses in their own homes) as so many of these mattresses have to be destroyed when sent for decontamination due to soiling and puncturing.

In the case of a contaminated non-foam mesh mattress, the cover and the inner core can be separated and cleaned in validated processes. If the cover is punctured, it is disposed of but the core is completely reusable. A non-foam mesh mattress costs €360.

Clinical Waste

The current contractor Reusable Sharps Containers system of is currently use in the following hospitals;

- St. James Hospital and Laboratory
- St. Vincent's University Hospital
- Cappagh Orthopaedic
- Rotunda Hospital
- Coombe Women's Hospital
- St. Michael's Hospital
- Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore
- Galway University Hospital (partial roll out)
- Our Lady of Lourdes
- Louth County Hospital
- Our Lady's Navan
- Dublin Dental Hospital
- Roscommon University Hospital
- Beamount Hospital
- St. Luke's Rathgar
- St. Luke's Hospital Kilkenny (partial roll out)
- Connolly (partial roll out)
- Royal Victoria Eye & Ear
- Cork University Hospital
- Mayo University Hospital
- Midlands Regional Hospital Portlaoise
- St. Joseph's Raheny

Carbon Offset for Reusable Containers

Estimates of how much carbon is offset for each reusable container used:

- 30.2 litre - container roughly 6 kg of CO₂e is avoided
- 7.5 litre - container roughly 2.3 kg of CO₂e is avoided

Estimates of total number of carbon offset by the HSE to date, by using Reusable Sharps Containers system

- 1114 Metric Tons of CO₂e based on;
- 177500 x 30.2 litre reusable containers and 18365 x 7.5 litre reusable containers

How many single use containers have the HSE prevented as a waste to date

- On average, the Reusable Sharps Containers system reusable containers last 250 uses. Based on this, the contractor can estimate that roughly 195K single use containers have been saved.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Head of Procurement on (01) 635 2688 or via john.swords@hse.ie

Yours sincerely,



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