

Shaping a Sustainable NHS Wales: Biodegradable Medicine Pots

Hywel Dda University Health Board



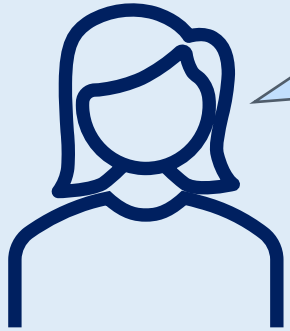
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Procurement Services

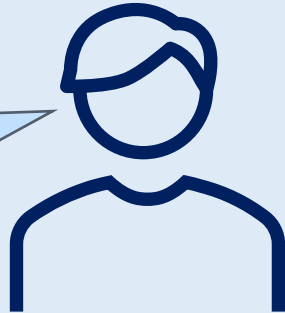
*Adding Value
Through Partnership,
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The Challenge: High Volume Single Use Plastic in NHS Wales



Did you know that across NHS Wales, we ordered **over 14 million plastic medicine pots** in 2024-25?

That's a lot! **What are we going to do about it?**



Our Aim

By March 2027, our aim is to have **reduced** the usage of **single use plastic and waxed paper** medicine pots by **3 million** and **replace with biodegradable** medicine pots to save approximately 8.88m³ of plastic waste going to landfill which takes between 400 and 500 years to breakdown.

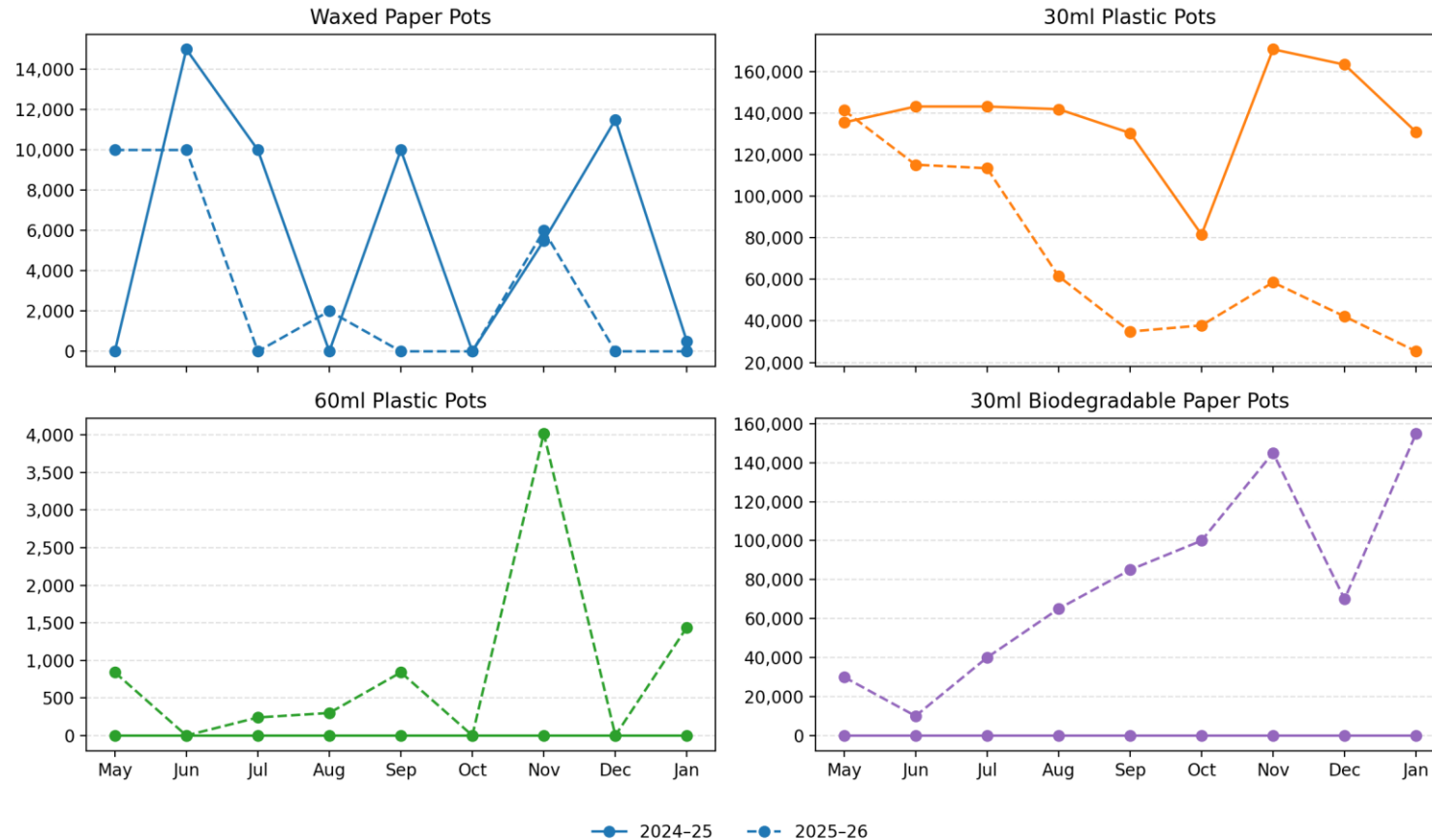
Short-Term Wins: Hywel Dda Leads the Way

- **Driver for Change** – How NHS Wales can deliver sustainable healthcare
- **Stakeholder Driven** – A ‘ground-up’ approach from wards and departments
- **Identifying Requirements** – Alternatives must be biodegradable, and can be used to measure dry and non-critical liquid medications (graduated)
- **Global Sourcing** – Learning from countries who are ahead of the game
- **The Procurement** – Quotation Exercise
- **Implementation** – Consolidated shipment (already UK-bound)
- **Introduction** – Targeted communication



Impact of Change: Hywel Dda Data

Monthly Orders by Product — May-Jan Comparison (2024-25 vs 2025-26)



Scaling Up: A Wales-Wide Opportunity

- **Hywel Dda Impact** – Since introducing biodegradable paper pots in May 2025, there's been 48% reduction in waxed paper and plastic pot usage
- **Scale Opportunity** – Hywel Dda accounted for 11.9% of waxed paper and plastic pot usage May 2024 – April 2025
- **By Luck, Not Design** – Supply chain issues of waxed paper pots led to All Wales option to purchase biodegradable paper pots – ordered by CVT (120,000), SBU (10,000), and CTM (5,000)
- **Spread Opportunity** – All Wales contract renewal in 2026 looks to widen scope
- **Other Nations** – NHS National Services Scotland have reached out requesting information on what NHS Wales are doing in this space

From Ambition to Action: Barriers to Progress

- **Quantifying Change** – Data and information maturity
- **How 'Green' is Green** – Paper production is also resource-intensive
- **Reporting Mechanisms** – No product-to-product data captured, only supplier HQ
- **Return on Investment** – Biodegradable pots may cost more, with minimal short-term financial savings
- **No Mandate** – High volume consumption but no mandate to reduce or eliminate
- **UK Supply Base** – Currently no onshoring appetite for suppliers, with limited nearshoring interest
- **Infrastructure** – Lack of existing infrastructure to support change

Policy Alignment: Enabling a Sustainable Future

- **Welsh Government** – Lead on national discussion for single use plastic reduction and promote sustainable procurement
- **Pathway Creation** – Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products) (Wales) Act 2023
- **Well-Being of Future Generations** – Alignment and goal achievement
- **UN Sustainable Development Goals** – Responsible consumption and production



Call to Action: Shaping a Sustainable NHS Wales

- ✓ **Mandate** biodegradable/compostable medicine pots across NHS Wales
- ✓ **Support** local manufacturing and composting infrastructure
- ✓ **Align** procurement with the Well-Being of Future Generations Act
- ✓ **Position** NHS Wales as a **global leader** in sustainable healthcare



Diolch Thank You

**If you have any questions, please
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