

Service Specification

Needle Syringe Programme in Worcestershire

Duration

Effective period: 17th October 2025 to 31st March 2031

1. Background

1.1 Needle and Syringe Programmes (NSPs) provide sterile needles, syringes, and other equipment used in the preparation and administration of illicit drugs. These services play a crucial role in reducing the transmission of blood-borne viruses (BBVs), such as hepatitis B and C, as well as other infections associated with sharing injecting equipment. NSPs aim to minimise the harms related to drug injection by offering health information, practical advice, and acting as a gateway to additional support services, including drug treatment programmes.

1.2 For some individuals—particularly those using performance and image-enhancing drugs—NSPs may represent their only point of contact with a healthcare professional. In England, these services are delivered through a variety of settings, with community pharmacies accounting for one of the main access points.

1.3 Pharmacy-based NSPs offer significant advantages, including broader geographic coverage and extended operating hours. This enhances accessibility and flexibility, ensuring that individuals can obtain sterile injecting equipment and support when and where they need it most.

2. Aims and Intended Service Outcomes

2.1 Providing sterile needles and syringes to individuals who inject drugs (particularly those at risk of opioid overdose) plays a vital role in safeguarding their health. This support continues throughout their treatment journey. The key objectives include:

- Protecting health and reducing the incidence of blood-borne infections and drug-related deaths
- Minimising high-risk injecting behaviours, such as sharing equipment
- Supplying sterile injecting equipment and related harm reduction support
- Promoting safer injecting practices

- Delivering and reinforcing harm reduction messages
- Raising awareness of opioid overdose symptoms and appropriate emergency responses
- Signposting or referring individuals to treatment services.

2.2 Improving public health by preventing the spread of blood-borne infections is supported through the provision of safe and effective disposal options for used injecting equipment.

2.3 NSPs function as a bridge to further care by offering referrals to Cranstoun and other health and social care professionals, where appropriate.

2.4 Efforts are made to maximise access and retention among all people who inject drugs, with a particular focus on those who are highly socially excluded.

2.5 The service can help individuals connect with a wider range of health and social care providers, supporting holistic recovery and wellbeing.

2.6 A core aim is to lower the number of fatalities linked to opioid overdose through education, intervention, and timely support.

3. Service Outline and Pharmacy Contractor Requirements

3.1 The pharmacy must display the national NSP logo in a prominent location visible from outside the premises. This promotional material will be provided by Cranstoun. If the pharmacy misplaces the window sticker, additional copies can be requested by emailing worcsprimarycare@cranstoun.org.uk

3.2 The pharmacy must make relevant Cranstoun health promotion materials available to service users and actively encourage their use. Sufficient stock should be maintained to ensure uninterrupted service delivery. Additional materials can be requested via worcsprimarycare@cranstoun.org.uk

3.3 Pharmacy staff are expected to offer support and advice to service users, including referrals to Cranstoun and other healthcare professionals where appropriate. Please see attached contact information sheet for ways to refer.

- 3.4** The pharmacy should promote safe practices among service users, including providing advice on sexual health, the transmission of blood borne viruses, particularly HIV and Hepatitis C, and the importance of Hepatitis B immunisation. Refer to **Section 11** for guidance on skills, competencies, and training requirements.
- 3.5** All service users accessing the NSP must be provided with sterile needles and syringes in a suitable bag at every opportunity. Equipment should be provided in line with the service user's needs and should under no circumstance be limited or restricted based on used needles being returned.
- 3.6** The service also includes the provision of injecting equipment for individuals using steroids and image-enhancing drugs.
- 3.7** If a service user requests equipment not available through the NSP, the pharmacy should refer them to Cranstoun for further assistance.
- 3.8** Service users may return used injecting equipment to the pharmacy for safe disposal. The accredited pharmacist must ensure that all staff are aware of the risks associated with handling returned items and follow correct procedures to minimise these risks. Please refer to **Section 9** for more information on the management of returned equipment.
- 3.9** It is the responsibility of the pharmacy contractor to ensure that all staff involved in delivering this service are offered Hepatitis B immunisation at the contractor's expense. Cranstoun strongly recommends that all participating staff are immunised.
- 3.10** The pharmacy must have a clearly visible Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for needle stick injuries. Under no circumstances should staff handle used needles or sharps boxes directly. A safe method for accepting returns should be in place, allowing items to be placed directly into appropriate disposal containers.
- 3.11** The accredited pharmacist is responsible for the overall delivery of the service and must be available for at least 60% of the time. They are accountable for ensuring the service is delivered in accordance with local guidelines.
- 3.12** While the accredited pharmacist does not need to be present for every NSP transaction, they are responsible for ensuring that any staff member involved is appropriately trained, as outlined in this agreement.
- 3.13** All pharmacists and staff involved in the NSP must be familiar with and operate in accordance with this service specification.

4. Brief Harm Minimisation and Health Promotion Interventions

4.1 Interventions will be conducted by a pharmacist or another suitably trained and competent staff member. These interactions aim to guide service users toward appropriate information, advice, and support. Topics may include:

- Safer injecting practices
- Sexual health promotion
- Understanding the transmission of blood-borne viruses (BBVs), along with the benefits of BBV testing and Hepatitis B vaccination
- Wound care and site management
- Nutritional advice
- Safe storage and disposal of injecting equipment and substances, particularly to prevent harm to others (e.g., children)
- Strategies to reduce harm and prevent drug-related deaths
- Opioid overdose prevention and response and how to access naloxone
- Sign posting or referring to the local Drug and Alcohol treatment service

4.2 All advice provided will align with recognised guidelines and best practices. It should be supported by appropriate harm reduction materials or literature, as recommended or signposted by Cranstoun.

5. Ordering of Needles and Syringes

5.1 Needle and syringe packs are supplied by Exchange Supplies. The current guide to pack contents will be provided alongside this service specification. For any queries, please contact info@exchangesupplies.org or 01305 262244.

5.2 The pharmacy is responsible for ordering needle syringe packs and associated materials directly from Exchange Supplies. Stock levels should be managed effectively to ensure continuous availability of supplies and appropriate stock control procedures maintained.

6. Data Recording and Information Sharing

6.1 The pharmacy must maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all service activities using the PharmOutcomes platform.

6.2 Cranstoun will provide the necessary licensing for data entry and management through PharmOutcomes. The data fields required in PharmOutcomes may be updated over time to reflect evolving commissioning requirements.

6.3 In general, pharmacy staff should not share information about a service user's participation in the NSP with prescribers or other services without the service user's consent. Disclosure is permitted when there is a duty of care, such as when the service user's health or the safety of others is at risk. This includes safeguarding concerns or child protection issues, where withholding information or seeking consent could increase risk.

6.4 Contractors are expected to share relevant information with healthcare professionals and partner agencies, in accordance with local confidentiality protocols. Service users should be informed when their information is shared, unless doing so would pose a risk to others (e.g. in cases of suspected child abuse).

6.5 Data Protection: All parties must comply with applicable data protection laws and regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, particularly when handling personal or special category data under this agreement.

7. Eligibility for Needle and Syringe Programme

7.1 The NSP is available to all adults aged 18 and over who require access to sterile injecting equipment in relation to illicit intravenous drug use. This includes individuals using performance-enhancing substances such as anabolic steroids and growth hormones.

7.2 Young people aged 18 and under should be signposted to the Cranstoun Here4Youth service. However, for those aged 16 to 18, where there may be a delay in accessing appropriate treatment, it may be considered appropriate to provide a limited supply of injecting equipment. This should only be done if it is believed that doing so will reduce the risk of harm, such as exposure to blood-borne viruses from reused equipment. In all cases, referral to the Here4Youth service should be encouraged, and information on how to access the service must be provided.

7.3 The NSP is not intended for individuals requiring injecting equipment for non-drug misuse-related medical treatments, such as insulin for diabetes. Separate arrangements exist for these patient groups through standard healthcare services.

8. Accessibility

8.1 Services will be accessible to all individuals during the pharmacy's standard opening hours.

8.2 The NSP operates on an open access basis, meaning service users do not need a referral from another agency to access support.

8.3 Service users have full autonomy over their engagement with the service. They can decide:

- Which delivery site they attend
- How frequently they engage with the service
- Which interventions or support options they wish to access

8.4 In the event of temporary service disruption (e.g., due to staff shortages or unforeseen closures):

- A business continuity plan will be implemented by the pharmacy to ensure continued access to services
- Cranstoun will be notified of the disruption and provided with details of any alternative arrangements that have been put in place

9. Management of Returns

9.1 Cranstoun is responsible for covering the costs associated with sharps bins and their disposal. A dedicated waste management provider has been commissioned to manage the collection and safe disposal of returned items.

9.2 Each needle syringe pack will include a sharps return bin to encourage safe return and disposal of used equipment.

9.3 Access to sterile equipment must not be denied if a service user is unable to return used items. Pharmacy staff should offer but not enforce a one-for-one exchange approach (providing new supplies in return for used equipment) as this can be counterproductive and may discourage engagement with the service.

9.3 The pharmacy must designate a secure area for storing both sterile equipment and returned items, ensuring the safety of staff and other pharmacy users. Returned equipment should be stored in the containers provided by the clinical waste disposal service.

9.4 Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)—including gloves, protective clothing, and spill management materials—must be readily available near the storage area.

9.5 Pharmacy contractors are responsible for ensuring there is adequate space within the disposal bins to meet demand without compromising staff safety. Sharps bin collections are managed by Cranstoun's chosen waste collection contractor on a scheduled basis. If the amount and frequency of returns exceeds allocated bins, then Cranstoun should be notified to discuss additional collections or bins. This can be requested via worcprimarycare@cranstoun.org.uk

10. Safeguarding

10.1 Pharmacy staff must be familiar with and always adhere to local safeguarding procedures for children and vulnerable adults.

10.2 All pharmacists and registered pharmacy technicians are required to complete Safeguarding training to an appropriate level commensurate to their role. Other pharmacy staff who may be directly or indirectly involved in delivering the service must be aware of the pharmacy's safeguarding protocols and escalation procedures.

11. Required Training

11.1 The accredited pharmacist will ensure that all practitioners and staff engaged in the delivery of this service are competent to do so.

11.2 The accredited pharmacist must have successfully completed the CPPE declaration of competence which includes the course "*Substance Use and Misuse*" (*Pharmacist Version*). Evidence of completion should be available to Cranstoun upon request.

11.3 By joining the NSP, the accredited pharmacist must confirm they meet these minimum requirements via enrolment on PharmOutcomes within this three-month period.

11.4 Other pharmacy staff delivering the NSP must have been trained and given relevant information by the accredited pharmacist.

11.5 All staff involved in delivering the service—including locum pharmacists—must complete appropriate training and demonstrate competence in accordance with this Service Level Agreement (SLA). We would recommend completion of the Level 1: Core knowledge and key practice skills course available on the Exchange Training website:- <https://training.exchangesupplies.org>

11.6 Cranstoun will provide at least two annual update training events for pharmacy team members. Additional training can be arranged as needed, in agreement with the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC). Training may be delivered through a combination of face-to-face sessions and on-demand online modules.

11.7 Training will cover relevant topics to reinforce knowledge, address skill gaps, and identify further training needs. It will also provide a forum for sharing incident learnings, resolving queries, and exploring service improvement opportunities.

11.8 Attendance at least one training event per annum is encouraged. The contractor or pharmacist attending must ensure that any updates or changes to service delivery are communicated to all pharmacy staff involved in providing the supervised consumption service.

12. Quality Indicators

12.1 The pharmacy must maintain up-to-date policies and procedures to support the effective delivery of this service.

12.2 The contractor is responsible for ensuring that all pharmacy staff—including other pharmacists and locums—involved in service delivery possess the necessary knowledge and training. This ensures seamless service continuity in the absence of the regular pharmacist.

12.3 The contract holder must ensure that appropriate professional indemnity insurance is in place.

12.4 By signing this agreement, the contractor agrees to comply with all requirements outlined in the essential services of the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework.

12.5 The pharmacy will ensure availability of written information and leaflets in the pharmacy relevant to the service, substance misuse and drug treatment as made available by Cranstoun. Promotional material on local services can be obtained by emailing worcsprimarycare@cranstoun.org.uk

12.6 The pharmacy is expected to fully cooperate with any local evaluations of the service, including assessments of service user experience. This may involve participation in initiatives such as the use of “mystery customers.”

12.7 Harm reduction information must be provided to every service user accessing the NSP. A private and confidential consultation space must be available to support these interactions.

12.8 The pharmacy contractor must have a system in place to ensure that messages on PharmOutcomes are checked and actioned regularly—**at least once per week**. PharmOutcomes serves as the primary communication channel between Cranstoun and pharmacies across Worcestershire.

12.9 The pharmacy contractor must ensure that sufficient support staff are available at all times, including individuals specifically trained to support the NSP. These staff members play a key role in assisting the pharmacist (including locums) with the operational delivery of the service and in maintaining its safe and efficient running.

13. Absence of Accredited Pharmacist

13.1 The pharmacy is responsible for ensuring that all staff members, including pharmacists and locums involved in delivering the NSP, possess the necessary knowledge and training to operate the service effectively. This ensures continuity of service during periods of staff absence.

13.2 If it is not possible to ensure immediate training, and a locum pharmacist is expected to be in place for 28 days or more, or is regularly contracted to work at the pharmacy, the service provider must:

- Notify Cranstoun
- Ensure the locum pharmacist completes the relevant training as outlined in this service specification

14. Incidents, Complaints and Feedback

14.1 All incidents and feedback relating to this service must be reported and investigated in accordance with the pharmacy's established incident reporting procedures.

14.2 Upon request, a summary of the incident report, including details of the investigation and outcomes, must be shared with Cranstoun.

14.3 Any serious incidents must be reported to Cranstoun within five working days. Any serious professional matters identified may be escalated to Public Health England, the GPhC and the Local Intelligence Network (LIN) if appropriate.

14.4 The pharmacy must have a suitable complaints policy or procedure in place. Complaints should be handled sensitively and reported promptly to Cranstoun by emailing worcsprimarycare@cranstoun.org.uk. The pharmacy must co-operate with investigations being completed by Cranstoun in relation to any complaints made by service users.

15. Payment Arrangements

Service	Payment
Needle syringe transaction (A single transaction is defined as the supply of any number of packs, along with the provision of advice, to one service user during a single visit)	£1.50
Monthly retainer	£25 per month

15.1 Payments will be processed monthly following the entry of service data into PharmOutcomes. Invoices will be automatically generated by PharmOutcomes on the 5th of each month.

15.2 Monthly payments for the NSP will be made for each month in which the pharmacy provides supervised consumption to a service user.

15.3 Payments will be made based on submitted claims and transferred to the bank account specified by the pharmacy.

15.4 The service contract and associated financial documentation must be completed and returned before any payments can be issued.

16. Specification Review

16.1 The Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) will be formally consulted on:

- The contract terms for commissioned pharmacy services.
- The fee structure associated with service delivery.

16.2 Formal LPC consultation will take place in Year 2 and Year 4 of the 6-year contract term.

16.3 LPC input will be considered as part of the service specification update process, with the aim of maintaining relevance to sector standards and local commissioning priorities.

17. Termination

17.1 The use and performance of the service will be reviewed regularly in consultation with the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC). If service uptake remains consistently low—despite efforts to address the issue—Cranstoun may redeploy the service to an alternative location. The LPC would be notified of this and may also offer support to the contractor in efforts to improve service engagement.

17.2 Either party may terminate this agreement by providing three months' written notice. However, Cranstoun reserves the right to suspend or terminate the service with immediate effect in the event of a significant issue or serious incident.

18. Acceptance of Service Specification: Needle Syringe Programme in Worcestershire

Please complete and sign the acceptance form and the supplier request form below and return to Laura Finnegan, Primary Care and Governance Lead, at worcprimarycare@cranstoun.org.uk

Service to be provided	Needle Syringe Programme in Worcestershire
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Pharmacy Details	
Pharmacy Name	
Pharmacy Address	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
Name of Pharmacist/authorized signatory signing service specification	
GPhC Number	
Signature	
Date	

Cranstoun Details	
Name	Cranstoun

Address	Cranstoun, Thames Mews, Portsmouth Road, Esher Surrey KT10 9AD
Phone Number	0208 335 1830
Email	accountspayable@cranstoun.org.uk
Name of person signing SLA	Matthew Burke
Position	County Manager
Signature	
Date	23/10/25

Supplier Information Request Form

Supplier details

Company name	Type Limited company/sole trader/partnership <i>Delete as appropriate</i>
Company no	Contact name
Address	Contact e-mail
Post code	Contact number

Bank details

Name of bank/building society	Sort code
Account name	Account number

Bank/building society address	Building society roll no. (if applicable)
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Signed	Date
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Internal use only

Contract	Cost centre
Entered to Finance System (date)	Entered to Finance System (by)
Supplier reference	

CRANSTOUN

Empowering People, Empowering Change

For any queries:

You can reach us on: 0300 303 8200

If lines are busy voicemail is available or send an email.

Email: worcs@cranstoun.org.uk

How to refer:

Please complete one of our professional referral forms: [Professional Referral Form - Cranstoun](#) or [Young Person Professional Referral Form - Cranstoun](#)

Or call: 0300 303 8200

We are open:

Monday - Friday 9am-5pm

Phone lines open at 9.30am

Please contact **Laura Finnegan, Primary Care and Governance Lead** at worcsprimarycare@cranstoun.org.uk for any service-related enquiries.

www.cranstoun.org

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