



Exploring clinical and non-clinical waste from home nutritional care

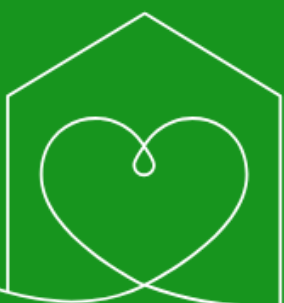
PINNT Update Survey 2025

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

This 2025 follow-up to the PINNT and BAPEN national survey provides the most comprehensive UK-wide update on sustainability, waste, and delivery reliability within Home Nutrition Support (HNS), covering Home Parenteral Support (HPS), Home Enteral Tube Feeding (HETF) and Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS). Drawing on responses from 212 individuals, the findings reveal that the challenges identified in the 2024 report not only persist but, for many, have intensified.

Persistent delivery failures and system fragility

Across all treatment types, most respondents reported no improvement in homecare services over the past year. Many described worsening reliability, erratic delivery schedules, incorrect or missing items, and repeated substitutions linked to supply chain instability. HETF users were the most affected, followed by HPS users who reported late, split or incomplete deliveries that at times posed safety risks. ONS users experienced fewer issues but still faced incorrect flavours, damaged items and courier problems.

Unplanned deliveries - often triggered by preventable errors - remain common, increasing environmental impact, patient burden and avoidable clinical workload.

Waste is predominantly system-driven, not patient-driven

A major theme is that most of the waste generated in HNS arises from operational inefficiencies rather than patient behaviour. Over-delivery, wrong items, oversized packaging, and inability to return unused products contribute to significant avoidable waste. Many respondents described receiving far more supplies than needed, being instructed to dispose of unopened items, and struggling with the volume of packaging entering their homes.

This waste creates emotional, spatial and practical burdens, with some households requiring additional waste bins and frequent trips to recycling centres.

Recycling guidance remains inconsistent and insufficient

Despite strong willingness to recycle, most respondents reported receiving no formal advice from healthcare professionals or homecare companies. Where guidance existed, it was inconsistent, limited to a narrow set of items, and often contradicted by local authority rules. Confusion was particularly evident around mixed plastics, syringes, giving sets and items perceived as “clinical” despite being non-clinical waste.

Patients repeatedly called for clear, standardised, written recycling guidance and better labelling on packaging.

Digital and administrative systems are not meeting patient needs

New electronic ordering systems were widely criticised for poor usability, lack of instructions, and failure to reflect stock availability. Many respondents reported orders defaulting to incorrect quantities, inability to report out-of-stock items, and lack of communication around substitutions. These system failures directly contribute to waste, inefficiency and patient distress.

Sustainability is a patient safety and equity issue

The report highlights that sustainability in HNS is inseparable from patient safety, wellbeing and equity. Delivery failures, inappropriate substitutions and unclear guidance have direct clinical consequences, particularly for those dependent on life-sustaining nutrition. The burden of managing waste and storage disproportionately affects people in small homes, social housing, or with limited physical capacity.

Patients are already contributing solutions — but need system-level support

Respondents described extensive self-led efforts to recycle and repurpose materials, from reusing trays and bags to donating syringes for art projects. However, they emphasised that meaningful progress requires coordinated action across homecare providers, manufacturers, commissioners and local authorities.

Clear messages to stakeholders

Patients asked for:

- **Healthcare professionals** to recognise the scale of waste, the emotional burden of delivery failures, and the need for clear recycling guidance.
- **Homecare companies** to improve delivery accuracy, reduce packaging, communicate proactively, and stop relying on patients to resolve system errors.
- **Commissioners** to address the financial and environmental cost of waste, hold providers accountable, and ensure waste infrastructure meets the needs of HNS users.

Conclusion

The 2025 findings show that sustainability challenges within HNS remain significant and largely unchanged since 2024. Delivery reliability, waste generation and inconsistent guidance continue to place avoidable burdens on patients and clinical teams. Yet the report also highlights a strong willingness among patients to contribute to sustainable practices - provided they receive clear information, reliable systems and coordinated support.

Improving sustainability in HNS is not simply an environmental goal; it is essential to patient safety, service quality and the long-term resilience of home nutrition pathways across the UK.



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