



## Cancer Research

How Bio Systems is helping Cancer Research UK reduce its plastic waste.

### Background

Established in 2007, the Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute was the first major new cancer research centre in the UK for over 50 years. It focuses on the practical application of high-quality research, collaborating with University of Cambridge, Addenbrooke's Hospital, the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, and others.

Stericycle manages a diverse set of waste streams generated on site at the institute, including clinical, domestic, metal, food, batteries, and confidential waste. The Institute's laboratories also generate sharps and pipette waste, which need to be disposed of safely. In 2013, Stericycle introduced its Bio Systems Sharps Management service, which has helped the institute increase efficiency and reduce its carbon footprint.

### Eliminating inefficiencies across the waste stream

Prior to the introduction of Stericycle's Bio Systems service, the institute was purchasing a large number of single-use containers that, once filled, were disposed of as an entire unit. Additionally, storage of the disposable containers and associated packaging was taking up considerable room.

The Institute had identified this as inefficient and to meet the challenge of sharps waste, it implemented the Bio Systems Sharps Management service, which replaces disposable containers with containers that are disinfected and reused up to 600 times each. This removes the need to store single-use plastic containers on site or monitor stock levels.

The implementation process was smooth, with clear communication across the laboratories ensuring teams were fully aware of the different phases. The institute opted for two different sizes of reusable containers – 7.5 litres and 30.2 litres – and an unmanaged service to suit the volume of waste generated.



### Improving sustainability

With Bio Systems fully implemented across all functioning laboratories, porters at the institute now undertake one collection a day, where full Bio Systems containers are replaced with clean containers.

This has eliminated the single-use plastic involved in the institute's management of sharps waste. The environmental benefits offered by the service were a huge draw, says Colin Weir, facilities team leader at the institute: "The carbon reductions presented by adopting Bio Systems was very attractive to us. Now, we are not purchasing disposable containers just to burn them once they are full."

The institute manages the storage of the Bio Systems transporters and the 770l bins in the external waste compound. The transportation of Bio Systems containers for collection, and replacement utilises the existing transport arrangements of 770l bins, to further reduce the carbon footprint.

Colin says: "The Bio Systems service delivers a consistent system where lab staff can take ownership of the waste produced in their respective areas while working towards meeting the institute's sustainability goals."