



The Safe Collection and Disposal of Discarded Sharps, Drugs and Drugs Paraphernalia in the Community

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Amongst the potential risks associated with clinical waste, the risk presented by coming into contact with “sharps” (hypodermic syringes & needles and other sharp items) probably gives rise to greatest public concern. Sharps discarded in public places present a risk of injury and possibly infection, not only to employees but also to the public at large and especially children.
- 1.2. In order to protect public health, systems are required at a local level to ensure the safe and efficient removal of discarded sharps in the community. Such systems require a co-ordinated approach to protect both employees involved in the collection of sharps and any members of the public who may be exposed to possible risk of infection.
- 1.3. The number of new patients accessing drug services who reported injecting in the month prior to assessment has reduced from 28% (2009/10) to 23% (2015/6).
- 1.4. The purpose of the protocol is to ensure the efficient, safe collection and disposal of sharps, drugs and drugs paraphernalia whilst also to serve to reassure the public.

2. THE PROTOCOL

- 2.1. This protocol details the joint strategy for ensuring the safe and efficient removal of discarded sharps found in the community. The practical and operational procedures relating to each stakeholder will be produced and implemented by each organisation.

3. ORGANISATIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLECTION

- 3.1. Sharps and drugs paraphernalia are likely to be found in a number of circumstances. During the working hours specified and detailed below, excluding Public Holiday, the following organisations will be responsible for the free collection and disposal of sharps.
- 3.2.

Organisation	Circumstances	Contact Details
Scottish Borders Council: SB Local Monday – Thursday 08:00 and 16:00 Friday 08:00 and 15:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During normal refuse collection • During normal park maintenance duties. • Found by a member of the public, having been carelessly discarded i.e. streets, public toilets, beaches etc. • During house searches and clearances conducted/contracted to the Council. (A 'special collection' cost may be imposed.) 	0300 100 1800 0300 100 1800 Or 0800 028 5711
Registered Social Landlords (RSL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for disposal on their sites during void or routine maintenance inspections by the RSL • Areas where access is restricted to RSL tenants and their visitors e.g. common stairs, clothes drying areas or bin stores. 	
RSL	Working Hours	
Scottish Borders Housing Association Tel: 01750 724444	Monday – Thursday (08:45 – 17:00) Friday (08:45 – 15:45)	
Eildon Housing Association Tel: 0300 0200 217 01750 725900	Monday, Tuesday & Thursday (08:45 – 17:00) Wednesday (10:00 – 17:00) Friday (08:45 -16:00)	
Berwickshire Housing Association Tel: 01361 884000	Monday – Thursday (09:00 – 16:30) Friday (09:00 – 15:30)	
Waverley Housing Tel: 01450 364200	Monday - Friday (08:45 – 17:00) Friday (08:45 – 15:30)	
Homelessness Services Tel: 01896 661385	Monday – Thursday (08:45 – 17:00) Friday (08:45 – 15:45)	

4. OUT OF HOURS

4.1. **Police Scotland** will undertake the collection of sharps where it has been reported to have been found in a public place and at a time when it is out-with the normal working hours for the appropriate organisation as specified above. **Tel:- 101**

5. ADHOC COLLECTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS (NOT SPECIFICALLY DETAILED IN PROTOCOL)

5.1 In addition to those instances when finds are reported to an organisation and dealt with in accordance with Paragraph 3 and 4, there may be an occasion where another organisation not specifically mentioned in the protocol may deal with the disposal of discarded sharps, drugs and drugs paraphernalia in the community in the course of normal business. It is anticipated that such collections will be minimal, however, it is equally important that Paragraphs 6 to 10 are taken into consideration, with the report submitted in accordance with Paragraph 11 and template in Appendix 1 if possible.

6. SAFE HANDLING

6.1. The advice on safe handling of sharps applies equally to members of the public and staff. A member of the public reporting finding a sharp in the community should be told:

- Do not touch the item
- Remain nearby if possible to direct the collection or cover the item to prevent others coming into contact with it
- Someone will uplift the item on the same day as report is made

6.2. Fundamental to this protocol is the safety of staff and public and all precautions must be taken to ensure this. All staff responsible for the collection of sharps **must be** offered hepatitis B immunisation by their employer.

6.3. Should a sharps injury be suffered by a member of the public or staff, the following first-aid measures should be communicated and carried out:

- Encourage bleeding of the infected area by squeezing (DO NOT SUCK).
- If possible wash the area with soap and water.
- If eyes / mouth are involved irrigate with tap water for 1-2 minutes.
- Go to the nearest Health Centre or Accident and Emergency Department immediately who will assess risk and provide appropriate treatment.
- Inform your G.P.

6.4. Additional Guidance for Employees and Employers

- Inform your Supervisor.
- Complete the appropriate injury on duty form (if applicable).
- Persons suffering from a needlestick injury can experience great anxiety and there may be a need to provide counselling to allay fears that have stemmed from such an incident.

7. TRAINING

Police, Council and RSL staff who are most likely to be involved with the reporting, collection and disposal of sharps should undertake a brief training session highlighting the Health & Safety considerations, risk assessment and procedure to be followed. It is the agencies responsibility to ensure this is done as part of its implementation of a safe system of work and compliance with Health & Safety law. Advice on the content of such a training programme can be obtained from the Health & Safety Executive website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/blood-borne-viruses/index.htm>

8. EQUIPMENT

- 8.1. It is the responsibility of the respective organisation to supply suitable sharps containers, gloves and forceps to staff. Additional equipment can be purchased by contacting the following organisations

<u>Sharpsbins:</u>	Gloves:
Daniels Healthcare, 14 Station Approach, Kidlington, OX5 1JD Tel: 01865 371841 Email: info@daniels.co.uk The local representative is Eric Bridgeford.	Fannin (UK) Limited 42-46 Booth Drive, Park Farm South, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 6GT. Tel: + 44 1 530 514566 Fax: +44 1189 305 111

9. DISPOSAL OF SHARPS, DRUGS & DRUGS PARAPHERNALIA

- 9.1. Drugs paraphernalia is the equipment used for taking drugs; this can include any thing from cigarette papers 'skins', 'rizlas' for rolling a 'joint' to smoke cannabis to a needle to inject heroin.

9.2. There is not just one kind of drug paraphernalia, like there is not just one drug. People take different drugs in different ways.

9.3. Drug users tend to use household items as paraphernalia such as:

- Spoons - they will be discoloured and have a burnt look if they have been used for this purpose. This may be used for burning heroin.
- Safety pins - they will also be discoloured and have a burnt look. Safety pins can be used for burning cannabis.
- Tin foil - this may have holes in and have a burnt appearance.
- Crisp packets - this will be used when inhaling solvents such as glue.
- Pipes - may be used for smoking cannabis or crack cocaine.
- Plastic bottles with the bottom cut off - this may be used for smoking cannabis.
- Mirror, razor/credit card and straw/rolled paper note- this may be used for cocaine.
- Needles and syringes used for injecting intravenous drugs such heroin.

9.4. Sharps should always be removed and deposited in approved sharps bin using forceps with rubber gloves being worn. The following action should be taken following the safe recovery of sharps, drugs and drugs paraphernalia.

Item recovered	Storage	Disposal location
Sharps (incl. needles, syringes, glass, knives, spoons, safety pins, razors) Foil, swabs, filters)	Approved sharps bin, using forceps.	Borders General Hospital, Melrose or local health centre for incineration. A replacement sharps bin will be provided.
Drugs (prescribed and illicit)	Plastic refuse bag	Community pharmacist for prescribed drugs. Local Police Station for illicit drugs.
Tourniquet, gloves etc	Double plastic refuse bag	Domestic waste wheelie bin.

9.5. Prescribed and Illicit Drugs

9.6. If drugs (prescribed or illicit) are recovered the following steps should be followed:

- For illicit or suspected illicit drugs, contact your local Police for guidance and advice. They will determine how the items should be recovered and disposed of.

- Place in an envelope, which is to be sealed and signed over the seal by two members of staff.
- Dispose of any prescribed drugs at a pharmacy.

10. OPERATIONAL POLICIES

10.1 This document should be integrated with the operational policies of the constituent agencies.

11. RECORDING & REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

11.1. In order that a strategic overview of the instances of sharps found in the community can be maintained, it is essential that all sharps recoveries are reported and appropriate records kept.

11.2. Staff from Scottish Borders Council and all Registered Social Landlords should report sharps recoveries to their Health & Safety Section/Representative. In turn, they will have responsibility of emailing the Recording Form (Appendix 1) to the Safer Communities Team, Scottish Borders Council, Newtown St. Boswells TD6 0SA.

Email: safercommunities@scotborders.gov.uk

Appendix 1
The Safe Collection & Disposal of Discarded Sharps Found In the Community
Recording Form

1. Description of hazard/find (e.g. needle on own, syringe and needle)	
2. Number collected	
3. Time/Date found	
4. Time/Date reported (if different from above)	
5. Source of report (e.g. member of public)	
6. Location of find	
7. Time/Date removed	
8. How was collection disposed of and by whom (Health Centre, BGH)	
9. Any additional comments	
10. Details of person who dealt with incident	

Please ensure this form is emailed to Safer Communities Team: safercommunities@scotborders.gov.uk