



The Safe Collection and Disposal of Drug Related Litter in the Community

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. To protect public health, systems are required at a local level to ensure the safe and efficient removal of injecting equipment and drug related paraphernalia in the community. This protocol includes injecting equipment and drug related paraphernalia (see section 9), and these items will be referred to as drug related litter. A co-ordinated approach is required to protect both employees involved in the collection of drug related litter and members of the public who may be exposed to possible risk of injury and infection. This protocol provides guidance and is intended for staff in the following areas:

- Scottish Borders Council (SBC) staff who will receive calls from public and enable accurate advice.
- SBC Staff responsible for collection of drug related litter during office hours.
- Registered Social Landlords staff responsible for collection of drug related litter during office hours.
- Police Scotland Staff responsible for collection of drug related litter out with office hours.
- Community Pharmacies who will receive drug related litter for safe disposal.

1.2. The purpose of injecting equipment provision (IEP) is harm reduction. The provision of injecting equipment helps prevent transmission of blood borne viruses such as hepatitis C and HIV among people who inject drugs. Whilst the health risks to the public from discarded injecting equipment are low in being infected by Hepatitis B or C virus they are still present.

Key points:

- The risk of infection following a needle-stick injury is very low.
- There have been no definite cases of HIV infection among healthcare workers following an occupational needle-stick injury in the UK since 1999.
- There are no documented cases of HIV infection through contact with a needle or syringe discarded in a public place.
- There are guidelines on the use of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) following needle-stick injuries. [Needlestick injuries, discarded needles and the risk of HIV transmission | aids map](#)

2. THE PROTOCOL

2.1. This protocol details the joint strategy for ensuring the safe and efficient removal of drug related litter 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. During the working hours specified and detailed below, excluding Public Holidays, 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	Monday - Friday (08:45 – 17:00)	

Tel: 01450 364200	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 or Public Holiday. **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 collection and disposal of drug related litter 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 drug related litter applies equally to members of the public and staff. A member of the public who reports finding needle/syringe in the community should be told:

- Do not touch the item
- To remain nearby if possible, to direct the waste team to the area the needles/syringe has been found.
- To cover the item to prevent others coming into contact with it
- Someone will uplift the item on the same day as the 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 drug related litter **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 or line manager.
- Complete the appropriate accident 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 procedures 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 found on 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 and forceps to staff. Suitable PPE such as gloves should also be made available.

9. DISPOSAL OF DRUG RELATED LITTER

9.1. Drug related litter includes the equipment used for taking drugs.

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

- People who use drugs tend to use household items as paraphernalia. The list below is not exhaustive and other items may be used.
- Spoons: they are likely to be discoloured and have a burnt look if they have been used for this purpose. Most likely to 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: may have holes and have a burnt appearance.
- Crisp packets: can 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: may be used for smoking cannabis.
- Mirror, razor/credit card and straw/rolled paper note: can be used for cocaine.
- Needles and syringes are used for injecting drugs such heroin or image enhancing drugs.

9.3. Sharps should always be removed and deposited in approved sharps bins 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, Use forceps.	We Are With You, 125 High Street, Galashiels or local community pharmacy injecting equipment provider (see appendix 1) for incineration. A replacement sharps bin will be provided.
Drugs (prescribed and illicit)	Plastic refuse bag	Community pharmacy for Prescribed drugs. Local Police Station for illicit drugs.
Tourniquet, gloves etc	Double plastic refuse bag	Domestic waste wheelie bin.

9.4. Prescribed and Illicit Drugs

- 9.5. 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 organisation involved.

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 needles/syringe 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 2) to the Safer Communities Team, Scottish Borders Council, Newtown St. Boswells TD6 0SA.
Email: safercommunities@scotborders.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Community Pharmacy Injecting Equipment Providers

Venue	Telephone No.	Opening Times Mon-Frid	Opening Times Saturday
We Are With You Borders	01896 757843	11.00am - 3.00pm	Closed
Lindsay & Gilmour Hawick	01450 372757	9am to 6pm 9am to 5pm (Tuesdays)	9am to 5pm
Lindsay & Gilmour Selkirk	01750 21723	09:00 - 13:00 and 14:00 - 18:00	09:00 - 13:00 and 14:00 - 17:00
Eyemouth Pharmacy	018907 50374	9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5.30pm	9am to 3pm
Right Medicine Pharmacy, Peebles	01721 720729	9am - 5.30pm	9am to 5pm
Rowlands Pharmacy, Kelso	01573 224613	8.30am to 5.30pm	9am to 5pm
Gala Pharmacy, Galashiels	01896 755948	9am to 5.30pm	9am to 5pm
Jedburgh Pharmacy, Jedburgh	01835 863489	8.45am to 5.30pm	9am to 1pm
GLM Romanes, Duns	01361 883753	9am to 5.30pm	9am to 5pm

Appendix 2

The Safe Collection & Disposal of Injecting Equipment (needles/syringes) 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