**CC23 - Sharps and Needlestick Policy and Procedure**

**Category:** Health and Safety  **Sub-category:** Health & Safety

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**Policy Review Sheet**

**Last Reviewed:** 26/06/19  **Last Amended:** 26/06/19

**Next planned review in 12 months, or sooner as required.**

**Note:** The full policy change history is available in your online management system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Impact:</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Critical</th>
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Changes are important, but urgent implementation is not required, incorporate into your existing workflow.

- **Reason for this review:** Scheduled review

- **Were changes made?** Yes

- **Summary:** Policy reviewed and updated. References checked and current - book reference converted to website resource. Addition to procedure in relation to dropped sharps boxes.

- **Relevant Legislation:**
  - Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013
  - Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
  - Provision and use of Work Equipment 1998
  - The Care Act 2014
  - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
  - The Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005
  - The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
  - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
  - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
  - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

- **Underpinning Knowledge - What have we used to ensure that the policy is current:**

- **Suggested action:**
  - Encourage sharing the policy through the use of the QCS App
  - Add the policy to the planned team meeting agendas
  - Ensure the policy is discussed in planned supervision sessions with relevant staff
  - Ensure relevant staff are aware of the content of the whole policy
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1. Purpose

1.1 To manage needles and other sharps safely and avoid cross infection.

1.2 To support North West Care Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Question</th>
<th>Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
<td>S1: How do systems, processes and practices keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
<td>S5: How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFECTIVE</td>
<td>E1: Are people’s needs and choices assessed and care, treatment and support delivered in line with current legislation, standards and evidence-based guidance to achieve effective outcomes?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that North West Care Ltd is registered to provide:

- Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Provision and use of Work Equipment 1998
- The Care Act 2014
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- The Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

2. Scope

2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:

- All staff

2.2 The following people may be affected by this policy:

- Service Users

2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:

- Commissioners
- External health professionals
- Local Authority
- NHS

3. Objectives

3.1 To maintain the highest standards of infection control at all times and ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, Service Users and staff are protected from the spread of infection.

3.2 For staff to have the knowledge and competence to reduce the risk of a sharps injury occurring and to respond correctly in the event of a sharps injury occurring.
4. Policy

4.1 North West Care Ltd will comply with the Sharps Regulations (2013) by embedding the following requirements in its procedures held within this policy:

- Avoid the unnecessary use of sharps
- Use safer sharps (incorporating protection mechanisms)
- Prevent the recapping of needles
- Place secure containers and instructions for the safe disposal of medical sharps close to the work area
- Ensure that information is provided to staff
- It is the injured member of staff’s duty to notify Mr Graham Burrell of a sharps accident
- Recording and investigating the incident
- Treatment and follow-up of a sharps injury

4.2 North West Care Ltd will have a sharps injury procedure in place that all staff will be aware of and this will be located in an accessible area.

4.3 North West Care Ltd will ensure that staff follow the requirements in relation to risk assessment and risk management and will refer to the Risk Assessment Policy at North West Care Ltd. Staff responsible for undertaking risk assessments will have been trained and assessed as competent to do so.

4.4 North West Care Ltd will nurture a culture of prevention and ‘no blame’ in relation to sharps management. This means that all procedures and processes in place to manage the risk of sharps injuries will be structured to ensure that prevention of injury is a priority.

In the event of an incident or accident, this will be investigated, reflected upon, lessons will be learned and practice will be reviewed. This will form part of the quality assurance and governance framework at North West Care Ltd.

4.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies at North West Care Ltd:

- Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Clinical Waste Disposal Policy and Procedure
- Infection Control Policy and Procedure

4.6 Universal precautions for infection control will be adhered to, and disposal of waste standards will be followed when undertaking procedures with sharps.

4.7 North West Care Ltd will have robust systems in place to ensure that there is an adequate supply of sharps containers at all times. North West Care Ltd will ensure that it remains aware of any new devices, equipment and best practices that may be available in order to promote the safety of Service Users and staff.
5. Procedure

5.1 Safer Sharps

Where possible, the use of needles and sharps devices will be eliminated. However, there may be occasions where there is no choice but to use sharps to support Service Users. In these instances, only safer sharps will be used as the alternative safest option.

North West Care Ltd will ensure that risk assessments are in place and that local procedures for working with and disposing of the sharps are in place. When choosing safer sharps, the following factors should inform the decision-making:

- The device must not compromise Service User care
- The reliability of the device
- Staff should be able to maintain appropriate control over the procedure
- Other safety hazards or sources of blood exposure that the use of the device may introduce
- Ease of use (taking into account the existing clinical practices commonly in use by the relevant health professionals – but not assuming custom and practice is safest)
- Access to manufacturers' guidance and instructions for use

Needles must not be recapped after use unless the risk assessment at North West Care Ltd has identified that recapping is itself required to prevent a risk (e.g. to reduce the risk of contamination of sterile preparations). In these limited cases, appropriate devices to control the risk of injury to employees must be provided.

Service Users will be encouraged to self-manage their diagnosis and monitoring, e.g. in the instance of diabetics and diabetes monitoring, staff will encourage self-administration of insulin and testing of blood sugar levels. Where support is required from staff, single-use retractable devices will be used.

5.2 Sharps Containment and Disposal

North West Care Ltd will choose a credible supplier who can provide suitable sharps containers that conform to BS 7320. Staff should refer to the Clinical Waste Disposal Policy and Procedure for guidance. The following safe practice will apply when using sharps containers:

- They should be portable enough to take to the site of a procedure
- They should be designed specifically to allow needles and sharp instruments to be disposed of easily and safely at the point of use
- They should be in sufficient supply at all times
- They should be stored off the floor when in use
- They should be easy to close temporarily and permanently, and there should be no risk of puncture of the container. Cardboard sharps bins must not be used
- Portable sharps bins must not be left unattended in areas where visitors (especially children) can access them
- Syringes/cartridges should be disposed of intact
- Staff will consider environmental factors such as good lighting and adequate space when carrying out procedures involving needles or sharps
- North West Care Ltd will place secure, clearly marked containers and instructions for the safe disposal of medical sharps close to the work area
- Sharps will be disposed of immediately at the point of use into the container
- Containers will be temporarily closed when not in use and permanently sealed when they are three-quarters full
- If a sharps bin is dropped/damaged it must be sealed, replaced and disposed of with caution

5.3 Risk Assessment Process

- Where risk assessments are introduced in relation to the use of sharps, the findings of the risk assessment should be documented and should form part of the action plan to reduce the risks of injury
- Such action plans should be time sensitive
- The results of the risk assessment should be shared with anyone identified as being at risk
- Steps should be taken to periodically review the effectiveness of the risk assessment and control measures in place. Staff should refer to the Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure at North West Care Ltd for standards when reviewing the risk assessment
5.4 Sharps Injury Procedure

In the event of a sharps injury, the following procedure must be followed:

- Encourage the wound to gently bleed, ideally holding it under running water
- Wash the wound using running water and plenty of soap
- Don't scrub the wound whilst you are washing it
- Don't suck the wound
- Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing
- Seek urgent medical advice (for example, from your GP or out of hours medical cover) as effective treatments are available
- Report the injury using the accident form

5.5 Recording and Investigating Sharps Injuries

Accident/incident forms completed for sharps injuries should include the following information to aid investigation:

- Who was injured, and when and where the incident occurred
- If possible, detail to identify what type of sharp was involved
- At what stage of a procedure or post-procedure/disposal of the sharp the injury occurred
- The severity of the injury

Mr Graham Burrell will review all accidents and incidents and record the date on which they are reviewed as part of the Accident and Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure.

Mr Graham Burrell will be responsible for investigating the circumstances and causes of the incident and take any action required.

The purpose of the investigation should be to establish whether the existing risk control measures at North West Care Ltd are adequate. It should look at underlying and root causes as well as the immediate factors that led to the incident.

Investigations should be conducted with accident prevention in mind. An investigation of a significant sharps injury may involve expertise from health and safety, occupational health and infection control teams (where available). Any lessons to be learned should be applied across North West Care Ltd (if appropriate), not just in the location or department where the accident occurred.

In the case of an injury where there may have been exposure to a blood-borne virus or other significant infection, the investigation may also involve establishing the infection status of the source Service User (where it is possible to identify the individual). If this information is known, it should be handled in accordance with appropriate requirements for Service User confidentiality. If it is promptly shared (with consent) with the medical professional who is treating the injured person, it can greatly assist with ensuring they receive the right treatment or that they do not take unnecessary prophylaxis or anti-viral treatments.

Dependent on the severity of the incident, Mr Graham Burrell should consider the need for counselling to support the member of staff.

5.6 Training and Education - Provision of information for staff

Staff should have access to information in relation to safe sharps practice.

The information provided to staff will include:

- The risks from injuries involving medical sharps
- The relevant legal duties on employers and workers
- Good practice in preventing injury
- The benefits and drawbacks of vaccination
- The support available to an injured person from their employer (see requirements on accident follow-up in section 5.5)
- Local practice with location and storage of sharps containers and types of sharps in use

This information will be delivered in different ways such as resource files, via staff meetings, notice boards, supervisions, health and safety minutes or via feedback from internal or external audit processes.
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Under the Sharps Regulations, the training provided to staff will cover:

• The safe use and disposal of medical sharps
• What to do in the event of a sharps injury (section 5.4)
• The arrangements for health surveillance and other procedures at North West Care Ltd
• The accident and incident reporting procedure
• The preventive measures including standard precautions, safe systems of work and the importance of immunisation (where applicable in relation to working environment and Service User risk)
• The correct use of medical devices incorporating sharps protection mechanisms

All new relevant staff will complete this training as part of their induction to the organisation. Existing staff will complete training as per the timescales set by local training policies.

All completed training will be logged on the training matrix at North West Care Ltd and will be subject to ad hoc knowledge and competency checks.

5.7 Audit and Evaluation

North West Care Ltd will review the following areas as part of the quality assurance programme and clinical governance framework:

• Compliance with the relevant procedures (if the procedures are not being followed there is usually a reason why, such as a lack of training, or a genuine practical problem with the procedure itself) and remedial action to findings
• Any areas where procedures are absent or inadequate. New ‘safer sharps’ may have become available for certain applications, or guidance may have been issued from a relevant authoritative body
• Consultation with the relevant staff and their representatives
• Injury and incident data
• Performance indicators will also be used to ensure that risk assessments are being implemented

6. Definitions

6.1 Sharps

• ‘Sharps’ are needles, blades (such as scalpels) and other medical instruments that are necessary for carrying out healthcare work and could cause an injury by cutting or pricking the skin

6.2 Sharps Injury

• A sharps injury is an incident, which causes a needle, blade (such as a scalpel) or other medical instruments to penetrate the skin. This is sometimes called a percutaneous injury

6.3 Safer Sharp

• ‘Safer sharp’ means medical sharps that incorporate features or mechanisms to prevent or minimise the risk of accidental injury. For example, a range of syringes and needles is now available with a shield or cover that slides or pivots to cover the needle after use

6.4 Recapping

• Injuries can occur after a needle has been used if the healthcare worker holds the needle in one hand and attempts to place a cap on the needle with the other hand (so-called two-handed recapping)
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Key Facts - Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- The effective, safe management of sharps flows from existing health and safety legislation, in particular, the need to assess the risks, provide staff with the appropriate information and training, and consult with employees in all aspects of safe practice
- All efforts should be made to eliminate the use of sharps where possible. The next safest option is to use safer sharp devices and equipment such as retractable needles, or safe caps
- You can expect to receive training and access to information in order to practice sharps safety
- North West Care Ltd promotes a preventative, no blame culture. In relation to sharps management, lessons are learned and you are fully encouraged and expected to discuss working practices and how they can be improved in order to provide quality safe care to Service Users

Key Facts - People Affected by The Service

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- Where applicable, you will be supported to continue to be independent with managing your medicine and monitoring your condition with your own devices and equipment
- You can expect staff to deliver safe care in a competent and knowledgeable manner
- The environment you live in will be kept safe and free from any risk associated with sharps. You are encouraged to raise any concerns you may have with regard to this policy with a member of staff

Further Reading

As well as the information in the ‘Underpinning Knowledge’ section of the review sheet we recommend that you add to your understanding in this policy area by considering the following materials:

HSE - Health and social care services: www.hse.gov.uk/healthservices/index.htm


Safer Needles Network - Protecting healthcare workers from needlestick injuries: http://www.saferneedles.org.uk/


Outstanding Practice

To be ‘Outstanding’ in this policy area you could provide evidence that:

- Sharps injury prevention forms an agenda item at health and safety meetings
- You have reviewed the use of sharps and successful removal of all unsafe devices
- You provide staff with consistent information and training which includes safe systems of work, correct use and disposal of sharps, the use of medical devices incorporating sharps protection mechanisms, measures to be taken in the event of a sharps injury and how to use any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided
- North West Care Ltd promotes a no blame culture and has incident reporting procedures and investigations that include feedback to staff/staff groups involved, in order to promote reflective learning practice
- The wide understanding of the policy is enabled by proactive use of the QCS App