

Needlestick Policy

RISKS AND PROCEDURES ASSOCIATED WITH NEEDLESTICK/SHARPS/SPLASH INJURIES AND HUMAN BITES

Risks of bloodborne viruses associated with needlestick/sharps/splash injuries and human bites

Bloodborne viruses (BBVs) are infectious agents that some people carry persistently in their blood. They can cause severe disease in some cases and few or no symptoms in others. The virus can be spread to another person and this may occur whether the carrier of the virus is ill or not. The main BBVs of concern are Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

Bloodborne viruses are spread predominantly by direct contact with the blood of an infected person, not by normal social contact and daily activities e.g. coughing, hugging, sharing toilets, food and crockery.

Transmission of BBVs may occur in a number of ways in educational establishments, including:

- Human bites, where blood has been drawn
- Accidental or malicious inoculation of blood by a contaminated sharp such as a hypodermic needle, epipen or lancet
- Blood splashes to mucous membranes e.g. eyes and mouth
- Contamination of broken skin where clothes have been soaked in blood

Safe disposal of sharps in educational establishments

On discovering a needle in the nursery grounds, guard the needle and summon help from another member of staff.

Request that the sharps retrieval kit (see below) be brought to the location.

- Do not attempt to recover discarded needles while wearing sandals or other open shoes, if the needle is dropped, it could injure your foot. It is also inadvisable to retrieve discarded needles with bare legs for the same reason.
- Never handle needles with your bare hands, always wear protective gloves – even when using tools to move needles.
- Sweep up needles with a dustpan and brush or use a pincer tool, and place them directly into a sharps box.
- Take the sharps box to the needle not vice versa.
- Do not hold the sharps box while depositing the needle, open it and place it on an even surface.
- Inform the manager as soon as possible of any needles found.

Needlestick injuries from hypodermic needles is a risk for certain workers from the careless or malicious disposal of needles. Those who clean areas used by the public and those who work with persons who normally use syringes, eg: in sheltered housing, should be risk-assessed for the likelihood of injury and any necessary control measures should be implemented. Under no circumstances should hypodermic needles be removed with bare hands.

The risk of infection depends on whether the needle is infected and how much material enters the bloodstream. There is also a risk of tetanus if the needle has been contaminated by soil.

Anyone finding a hypodermic needle in a public area should contact the Council's cleansing contractors who, wearing suitable protective clothing, will place it in a "sharps" container for disposal as clinical waste by incineration. Contact should be made via Forestcare out of normal working hours.



Forestcare Emergency Response
Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Tel: 01344 786500
Fax: 01344 353236

Injuries and exposure

Persons receiving injuries or exposed to circumstances where there is reason to believe that infection could have occurred should seek immediate medical advice from their General Practitioner, the Council's Occupational Health Adviser or the Accident and Emergency Department of the nearest hospital.