

# SHARPS INJURY POLICY

## Policy Statement

The aim of Complete Care Agency is to maintain the highest standards of infection control at all times and ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, our service users and staff are protected, where possible, from the spread of infection.

## Scope

Complete Care Agency understands that the safe use and disposal of medical sharps safety is covered by a number of legal requirements, including:

- Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 (the Sharps Regulations)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005
- Reporting of Incidents, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

Complete Care Agency aims to comply fully with all of these regulations, as well as local authority interpretations and guidelines.

## Background

Complete Care Agency understands 'sharps' to refer to any waste items that might cause a penetrating skin injury and which may have the potential to cause infection and spread disease, particularly 'bloodborne' diseases such as hepatitis and HIV. In the community where we may offer nursing care, 'sharps' may include items such as needles, scalpel blades and glass ampoules from injections.

In order to protect our service users and staff from the spread of such infections, and in order to maintain their health and well-being, Complete Care Agency is committed to the highest possible standards of infection control. Complete Care Agency recognises that the proper handling and disposal of 'sharps' is a key area in this regard.

The policy is based on evidence-based guidelines, including those on clinical waste and on the use of personal protective equipment.

## Policy

At Complete Care Agency:

The manager or infection control lead is required to undertake or coordinate a risk assessment to determine:

- The potential risks of 'sharps' injuries
- Who may be affected
- Methods of eliminating risks completely or, where this is not practicable, methods of reducing risks to acceptable levels.

In order to comply with the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 (the Sharps Regulations), staff should avoid the unnecessary use of sharps wherever possible. Where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid the use of medical sharps, staff should:

- use "safer" sharps wherever possible – new technologies that aim to prevent accidents
- avoid the recapping of needles
- place secure containers and instructions for safe disposal of medical sharps close to the work area.

Wherever sharps are used, any potentially hazardous waste — typically needles, blades and broken ampoules— should be disposed of in proper, purpose-built sharps disposal containers provided by community District nurses/Pharmacy and complying with BS7320. Sharps should never be disposed of in ordinary or clinical waste bags.

Where a 'sharps' injury does occur, staff should gently encourage the puncture wound to bleed and then wash the wound under running water. They should not scrub or suck the wound but should cover the wound after cleaning with a clean dressing.

Any sharps injury should be reported immediately to the person's line manager and an incident report should be completed.

Where the sharps incident involves an unused needle or sharps item then no further action need be taken.

Where the sharps incident involves a used needle or sharps item then the person suffering the injury should be assessed by an appropriate health practitioner without delay. Where available this should be through an A&E department.

All staff should be followed up via a GP on the next working day.

Any non-staff suffering a similar accident should attend A&E and should be followed-up by their own GP as advised.

## **Management Duties**

Managers and supervisors have a duty to:

- ensure that all waste, including sharps waste, is disposed of safely and appropriately according to this policy
- ensure that appropriate infection control and sharps handling and disposal policies are effectively implemented in Complete Care Agency, are clearly understood by all members of staff, including temporary and agency staff, and are regularly reviewed and revised in light of the most recent best practice guidelines
- monitor carefully any incident reports relating to infection control or clinical waste matters in order to identify any trends or patterns
- ensure that staff are provided with appropriate training, equipment and resources such as PPE, waste bags, sharps disposal bins, hand washing equipment and facilities and, where required, alcohol hand gels
- be aware that all the time clinical waste is on the property it is their responsibility to ensure its safety and security.

## **Staff Duties**

Staff have a duty to:

- comply with all infection control policies, procedures and guidelines at all times, including the clinical waste and sharps use and disposal procedures, properly utilising any personal protective equipment provided and carrying out their duties in accordance with their training and good practice
- wash their hands regularly after handling waste and sharps waste
- ensure that sharps waste is properly disposed of in purpose built sharps boxes and never in ordinary waste bags or clinical waste bags
- help to keep Complete Care Agency clean and tidy and alert the manager to any incidences of poor standards of cleanliness or hygiene
- report any sharps 'incident' or 'near miss'

## **Training and Information**

Complete Care Agency views infection control training and supervision as a vital part of its infection control procedures.

All new staff should attend basic infection control awareness training and should read the policy on infection control and food preparation and handling as part of their induction process.

All staff should be trained in the proper implementation of this policy.

Records of attendance at infection control training will be kept including date attended and level of training.

All of the care home policies, including this one, are made fully available to service users, their families and representatives.

Staff who are expected to handle sharps and sharps waste will be fully trained in safe techniques, practices and processes.

Review of this Policy

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Complete Care Agency

## Immediate Action Following a Sharps Accident

