

POL18 – Sharps and Needstick Policy and Procedure

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
Unit 5 Millennium Way, Dunston, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S41 8ND



1. Purpose

- 1.1 To manage needles and sharps safely, and avoid cross infection
- 1.2 To adhere to and comply with the relevant current legislation and nationally recognised best practice statement in relation to sharps safely.
- 1.3 To support Serendipity Healthcare Ltd in meeting the following Key Line of Enquiry

Key Question	Key Lines of Enquiry
EFFECTIVE	E2: How does the service make sure that staff have the skills, knowledge, and experience to deliver effective care and support?
SAFE	S5: How well are people protected by the prevention and control of infection?
SAFE	S6: Are lessons learned and improvements made when things go wrong?
WELL-LED	W2: Does the governance framework ensure that responsibilities are clear, and that quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements are understood and managed?

1.4 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Serendipity Healthcare 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 2025
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1074
- 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 Service Users may be affected by this policy:

- Service Users

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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 is reasonably practical, service users and staff are protected from the spread of infection

3.2 For staff to have the knowledge and competence to manage the prevention of sharps injuries and to be responsive in the event of a sharp's injury occurring.

3.3 Whilst it is recognised that Care Workers may not be involved directly in the use or administration of sharps, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd recognises that this policy and procedure is important for all staff to be aware of how to prevent injuries from sharps.

4. Policy

4.1 Serendipity Healthcare 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 safe disposal of medical sharps close to work area
- Ensure information is provided to employees
- It is the injured employee's duty to notify Serendipity Healthcare of a sharp's incident
- Recording and investigating the incident
- Treatment and follow-up of a sharp's injury

4.2 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will have a sharps injury procedure in place that all staff will be made aware of

4.3 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that staff follow the requirements in relation to risk management.

4.4 Serendipity Healthcare 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 risk of sharps injuries will be structures to ensure that prevention of injury is a priority

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4.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policy

POL17 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 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will have robust systems in place to ensure that there is an adequate supply of sharps containers at all times. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that it remains aware of any new devices, equipment and best practices that may be available to promote the safety of Service Users and staff.

5. Procedure

5.1 Safer Sharp

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

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that risk assessments are in place and 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 (considering 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 is safest

Needles must not be recapped after use unless the risk assessment has identified that recapping is itself required to prevent a risk (e.g., to reduce the risk from contamination of sterile preparations)

Service users will be encouraged to self-manage their diagnosis and monitoring, e.g., in the instance of diabetes 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.

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5.2 Sharps Containment and Disposal

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that any sharps containers provided conform to BS7320. The following safe practice will apply when using sharps contains:

- They should be portable enough to take to the site of a procedure
- Designed specifically to allow needles and sharp instruments to be disposed of easily and safely at the point of use.
- They should be stored off the floor when in use
- It is not acceptable to reduce the number of sharps bins to such an extent that staff are forced to carry used needles to the sharps bin to dispose of them
- They should be easily to close temporarily and permanently, and there should be no risk of puncture of the container. Carboard sharps bins be disposed of intact
- Care is needed to ensure portable sharps bins are not left where children can easily access them. Syringes/cartridges should be disposed of intact
- Place secure containers and instructions for safe disposal of medical sharps close to work area
- Containers will be clearly marked, and secure containers will be placed close to the areas where medical sharps are used. Instructions for staff on the safe disposal of sharps must also be placed with the Care Plan
- Sharps will be disposed of immediately at the point of use the container
- Containers will be temporarily closed when not in use and permanently sealed when they are three quarters full
- Serendipity Healthcare Ltd must notify the organisation responsible for proving the sharps containers of any concerns or when the container is ready for collection

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 to reduce the risks of injury
- Such action plans should be time sensitive
- Results of the risk assessment should be shared with all workers 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 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure for standards when reviewing the risk assessment

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5.4 Sharps Injury Procedure

In the event of a sharp's 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
- Do not scrub the wound whilst you are washing it
- Do not suck the wound
- Dry the wound and cover it with a waterproof plaster or dressing
- Seek urgent medical advice (for example from the GP or out of hours or A and E)
- Report the injury to the Team Leader

5.5 Recording and Investigating Sharps Injuries

Occurrence 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 of post-procedure/disposal of the sharp the injury occurred
- The severity of the injury

Managers will review all occurrences and record the date when they review as part of the Accident and Incident Reporting Policy

Managers will be responsible for investigating the circumstances and 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 sharp's injury may involve expertise from Health and Safety, occupational health, and infection control leads. Any lessons learned should be applied across the organisation.

In the case of injury where there may have been exposed to 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 users' 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, the manager should consider the need for counselling to support the member of staff.

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5.6 Training and Education – Provision of Information for staff

Staff should have access to information relation to safe sharps practice

The information provided for staff will include:

- The risks form injuries involving medical sharps
- Relevant legal duties in preventing injury
- Good practice in preventing injury
- The benefits and drawbacks of vaccination
- The support available to an injured person from their employer
- Local practice with location and storage of sharps containers and types of sharps in use.

This information will be delivered in different ways to such as resource files vis staff meetings, supervisions, and the PASS system

Staff Training

Under the sharps Regulations, the training provided to staff will cover:

- Safe use and disposal of medical sharps
- What to do in the event of an injury
- Serendipity Healthcare’s arrangements for health surveillance and other procedures
- Accident and incident reporting procedures
- Preventative measures including standard precautions, safe systems of work and the importance of hepatitis B immunisation.
- Correct use of medical devices incorporating sharps protection mechanisms

All new 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 Serendipity Healthcare Ltd training matrix and will be subjected to ADHOC knowledge and competency checks

6. Definitions

6.1 Sharps

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

6.2

Sharps Injury is an incident which causes a needle, a blade, or other medical instruments to penetrate the skin. This sometimes called a percutaneous injury.

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6.3 Safe 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 worker holds the needle in one hand and attempts to place cap on the needle with the other hand (so-called two-handed re-capping)

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