



HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE PWYLLGOR IECHYD A DIOGELWCH

DYDDIAD Y CYFARFOD: DATE OF MEETING:	13 September 2021
TEITL YR ADRODDIAD: TITLE OF REPORT:	Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 (the Sharps Regulations)
CYFARWYDDWR ARWEINIOL: LEAD DIRECTOR:	Mandy Rayani, Director of Nursing, Quality and Patient Experience
SWYDDOG ADRODD: REPORTING OFFICER:	Tim Harrison, Head of Health, Safety & Security

Pwrpas yr Adroddiad (dewiswch fel yn addas)

Purpose of the Report (select as appropriate)

Er Sicrwydd/For Assurance

ADRODDIAD SCAA

SBAR REPORT

Sefyllfa / Situation

This report is presented to the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) to provide assurance against the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 (the Sharps Regulations).

For ease of reading, the legislative requirement combined with an assessment against each regulation is referenced within the Assessment section below, and a self-assessed RAG rating applied against each.

Cefndir / Background

All employers are required under existing health and safety law to ensure that risks from sharps injuries are adequately assessed and appropriate control measures are in place. The Sharps Regulations supplement the existing law and provide specific detail on requirements that must be taken by healthcare employers

Use and disposal of medical sharps follow the principles of the hierarchy of preventative control measures set out in the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH).

Asesiad / Assessment

Regulation 5(1)(a) Avoid the unnecessary use of sharps

Needles, scalpels etc. will remain essential tools for effective medical care. However, the Health Board should ensure that sharps are only used where they are required.

Needle-free equipment is available for certain procedures and should be used, where it is reasonably practicable to do so.

Where non-safety sharps are used where a safer alternative is available, a risk assessment process is in place to ensure that clinical justification is applied. The risk assessments are submitted to the Safer Sharps Group for review and decisions made as to whether this is acceptable practice.

Regulation 5(1)(b) Use safer sharps (incorporating protection mechanisms)

Where it is not reasonably practicable to avoid the use of medical sharps, the Sharps regulations require employers to:

The Health Board must substitute traditional, unprotected medical sharps with a 'safer sharp' where it is reasonably practicable to do so. The term '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 are now available with a shield or cover that slides or pivots to cover the needle after use.

The Health Board has a variety of 'safer sharps' products in use including the following examples: safety cannulas, safety hypodermic needles, blunt needles, vacutainer blood collection, safety insulin syringe, insulin safety pen needle, safety butterfly products.

Regulation 5(1)(c) - Prevent the recapping of needles

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

Prior to the COVID-19 vaccination programme, this regulation would be fully compliant. However, a number of incidents have occurred in the vaccination centres due to re-sheathing of needles. A specific generic risk assessment has been produced for this current risk and is reliant on how the vaccination is delivered and administered.

Regulation 5(1)(d) – Place secure containers and instructions for safe disposal of medical sharps close to the work area

The Sharps Regulations supplement the COSHH Regulations in disposing of contaminated waste safely by requiring that clearly marked and secure containers be placed close to the areas where medical sharps are used. Instructions for staff on safe disposal of sharps must also be placed in those areas.

Adequate sharps containers are made available where needed and therefore this Regulation is on the whole complied with. However, following a review of sharps incidents there have been a few examples where this practice should have been adhered to.

Regulation 6 – The information provided to employee

Information is provided in many forms, including safe operating systems, safety guides, and posters to raise awareness of the risks from medical sharps.

Regulation 6(4) – Employee training

Training is provided by the Health Board Clinical Skills Trainer, Skills to Care, as well as support by the various safer sharp product representatives.

Regulation 7(1) – Recording and investigating the incident

Employers must make a record of the sharps injury when they are notified of it. They must investigate the circumstances and causes of the incident and take any action required. The injured person is required to provide sufficient information to their employer to allow them to carry out this investigation.

This area of work has improved with the introduction of a sharps investigation checklist which is completed following sharps incidents.

Regulation 7(2) – Treatment and follow-up of a sharp injury

The employer must ensure that, when notified of any incident in which an employee has been injured by a sharp that has or may have exposed them to a blood borne virus, the employee:

- *has immediate access to medical advice;*
- *has been offered post-exposure prophylaxis and any other medical treatment, as advised by a doctor; and*
- *the employer has considered whether counselling would be appropriate for the employee.*

Where this occurs, employees attend our Emergency Departments in the first instance and are then referred to the Occupational Health Department

Regulation 8 – Injured employee’s duty to notify their employer of a sharps accident

An employee who receives a sharps injury at work must notify their employer as soon as practicable.

All staff have access to the Datix system and there is evidence that this element is complied with.

Argymhelliad / Recommendation

For the Health and Safety Committee to gain assurance from this report that the fundamental elements of the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013 (the Sharps Regulations) are being complied with.

Amcanion: (rhaid cwblhau)	
Objectives: (must be completed)	
Committee ToR Reference: Cyfeirnod Cylch Gorchwyl y Pwyllgor:	2.1 Provide assurance around the UHB arrangements for ensuring the health, safety, welfare and security of all employees and of those who may be affected by work-related activities, such as patients, members of the public, volunteers contractors etc.
Cyfeirnod Cofrestr Risg Datix a Sgôr Cyfredol: Datix Risk Register Reference and Score:	Not applicable
Safon(au) Gofal ac Iechyd: Health and Care Standard(s):	1. Staying Healthy 2. Safe Care 2.1 Managing Risk and Promoting Health and Safety 2.4 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Decontamination
Nodau Gwella Ansawdd: Quality Improvement Goal(s):	All Quality Improvement Goals Apply
Amcanion Strategol y BIP: UHB Strategic Objectives:	2. Living and working well.
Amcanion Llesiant BIP: UHB Well-being Objectives: Hyperlink to HDdUHB Well-being Objectives Annual Report	2. Develop a skilled and flexible workforce to meet the changing needs of the modern NHS

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Gwybodaeth Ychwanegol: Further Information:	
Ar sail tystiolaeth: Evidence Base:	Contained within the body of the report.
Rhestr Termiau: Glossary of Terms:	Contained within the body of the report.
Partïon / Pwyllgorau â ymgynhorwyd ymlaen llaw y Pwyllgor Ansawdd lechyd a Diogelwch: Parties / Committees consulted prior to Health and Safety Assurance Committee:	No consultation to date but will be shared with Quality and Safety/Governance meetings as well as County Partnership Forums.

Effaith: (rhaid cwblhau) Impact: (must be completed)	
Ariannol / Gwerth am Arian: Financial / Service:	There may be financial implications if the issues identified require monetary rectification.
Ansawdd / Gofal Claf: Quality / Patient Care:	
Gweithlu: Workforce:	Potential for adverse future staffing impacts if this legislation is not complied with as it relates to employee safety
Risg: Risk:	Risk to health and safety management
Cyfreithiol: Legal:	Potential for enforcement action including Improvement Notices/Prosecutions and claims due to breaches in legislation.
Enw Da: Reputational:	Potential for enforcement action including Improvement Notices/Prosecutions and claims due to breaches in legislation.
Gyfrinachedd: Privacy:	Not Applicable
Cydraddoldeb: Equality:	Has EqIA screening been undertaken? No