

Title:			
Injecting Equipment Provision in Lothian Policy			
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<b>Author/s:</b>	Senior Health Policy Officer, Public Health		
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Manager, Harm Reduction Team		
<b>Executive Lead:</b>	Director of Public Health		
<b>Target Audience:</b>	NHS Lothian harm reduction team staff (based Spittal Street Centre), community pharmacies which hold a contract with NHS Lothian for providing injecting equipment, and third sector drugs agencies in Lothian which provide injecting equipment to injecting drug users (in partnership with NHS Lothian).		
<b>Supersedes:</b>	Policy on Injecting Equipment Provision in Lothian, version December 2013		
<b>Keywords (min. 5):</b>	Injecting equipment, drug use, blood-borne viruses, HIV, hepatitis, harm		

# Injecting Equipment Provision Policy



## Version Control

Date	Author	Version/Page	Reason for change
29/06/2018	Senior Health Policy Officer, Public Health	June 2018 v 3.3	Updated from previous version Dec 2013
24/09/2018	Senior Health Policy Officer, Public Health	v4.0	Review approved

## Executive Summary

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NHS Lothian provides free injecting equipment and paraphernalia and education on safer injecting techniques for people with injecting drug use as a way of minimising harm and reducing spread of HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Provision is made via NHS sites, community pharmacies and third sector drugs agencies. Often this service is the only one used by the service users and so it serves as an important point of contact for information/referral to other services.

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## 1.0 Purpose

This policy enables NHS Lothian to reduce the risks of harm associated with injecting drug use and to prevent the spread of blood borne viruses.

Injectors are susceptible to a range of blood-borne virus infections from sharing injecting equipment and paraphernalia, the most prevalent of which is Hepatitis C infection. 58% of injecting drugs users in Lothian are hepatitis C antibody positive.

There is also a number of health risks associated with injecting drug use, including bacterial infections such as septicaemia, tetanus, and anthrax. Abscesses, cellulitis and collapsed veins can also result from incorrect and unhygienic injecting practices.

It is important that NHS Lothian minimises harm by ensuring that every person injecting drugs should have a clean set of equipment for every injection episode.

## 2.0 Policy statement

NHS Lothian provides:

- Free sterile injecting equipment, swabs and sharps containers and water
- Facilities for safe disposal of used injecting equipment
- Information and advice on blood-borne virus testing
- Education on safer injecting, injecting technique, safer drug use
- Naloxone
- Assessment and referral to drug treatment and other services

Providers should ensure that enough equipment is given out to cover the number of injections per day that a client is suggesting. There is no limit to the amount of equipment that can be given out.

Provision of equipment for secondary distribution is acceptable.

There is no requirement for a client to return used equipment before new equipment is given out.

All individuals involved in distributing injecting equipment should receive appropriate training prior to providing a service or during induction.

## 3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all outlets in Lothian which provide needles, syringes and other injecting paraphernalia to people who inject opiates, stimulants, performance and image enhancing drugs, and other illicit substances. This includes NHS outlets (main base is Spittal Street Centre), 18 community pharmacies which hold a contract with NHS Lothian for this purpose, and 4 third sector drugs agencies which work in partnership with NHS Lothian.

This policy covers the provision of injecting equipment to people over the age of sixteen.

## 4.0 Definitions

Blood-borne viruses = HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C

## 5.0 Implementation roles and responsibilities

Integrated Joint Boards have agreed that the NHS Lothian Harm Reduction Service remains a Lothian-wide service within the Substance Misuse Directorate, hosted by Royal Edinburgh and Associated Services.

Ownership and key responsibility for implementation of this policy lies with the Manager of the Harm Reduction Team based at Spittal Street Centre. The NHS Lothian Harm Reduction Team has responsibility for purchasing the consumables for whole of Lothian, and implementation of this policy among all staff who provide an injecting equipment service, including community pharmacy staff and workers based in third sector drugs agencies.

18 community pharmacies are contracted under the NHS to offer injection equipment provision. Pharmacists are given a monthly payment and a payment for each individual injection equipment transaction. These fees are negotiated locally by the Lothian Pharmacy Contractors' Committee and representatives of NHS Lothian.

Third sector drugs agencies hold a contract for provision of injecting equipment with their local Drug and Alcohol Partnership (NHS Lothian is a partner).

NHS Boards are obliged to take part in the national monitoring of injecting equipment service activity through the collection of a minimum data set on the Needle Exchange Online database. The purpose of this is to allow the Scottish Government to determine whether NHS Boards are distributing enough equipment to meet the needs of their local injecting drug user populations and to provide a basis for ongoing needs assessment and future service development.

## 6.0 Associated materials

Guideline on Injecting Equipment Provision (under review)

Protocol on Client Engagement

The Harm Reduction Team and the Lothian Viral Hepatitis Managed Care Network has delegated authority for developing the associated materials.

## 7.0 Evidence base

Guidelines for services providing injecting equipment: Best practice recommendations for commissioners and injecting equipment provision (IEP) services in Scotland, Scottish Government 2010.

Health Protection Scotland, University of the West of Scotland, Glasgow Caledonian University and the West of Scotland Specialist Virology Centre. The Needle Exchange

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Surveillance Initiative: Prevalence of blood-borne viruses and injecting risk behaviours among people who inject drugs attending injecting equipment provision services in Scotland, 2008-09 to 2015-16. Glasgow: Health Protection Scotland, March 2017.

## 8.0 Stakeholder consultation

This policy has been developed in conjunction members of the Lothian Viral Hepatitis Managed Care Network, Prevention Action Group. This group comprises NHS and third providers of injecting equipment for people who inject drugs, Public Health and Health Promotion representatives, and Alcohol and Drug Partnership officers.

## 9.0 Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored and reviewed every two years by the Hepatitis Managed Care Network's Prevention Action Group which in turn is informed by the National Prevention Network, hosted by Health Protection Scotland. The national network is part of the Government's infrastructure for the implementation of the Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Framework.

This policy will be reviewed in October 2020.