

NHS Lothian Injecting Equipment Services

Protocol on Client Engagement

August 2010

1 Assessing new clients

All clients attending for the first time should be welcomed to the service and asked some basic information about their injecting practices. The purpose of this initial assessment is to ensure that clients' equipment needs are addressed and that they leave with sufficient supplies to enable the use of one set of equipment per injection. This initial discussion should take place in a private area, separate from the public, to ensure client confidentiality. It should include both verbal and written information about safer injecting practices and safe disposal of used equipment.

At first visit, service providers should ask the client about:

1. Where on their body, and how often they inject
2. What drug the client is injecting and the techniques they are using.
3. How often they (usually or intend to) visit the IEP service
4. Whether they are collecting supplies for anyone else
5. Their understanding of the implications of sharing equipment (information re HIV, hepatitis B and C).

Under 16s

The distribution of IEP to young people under the age of sixteen is a complex area and should only be taken by workers trained and skilled in assessing and responding to the needs of young people. Workers in community pharmacies and third sector agencies who get requests for injecting equipment from young people should refer them to the Spittal Street Centre which has its own protocol in place for under sixteens.

Ongoing assessment of clients

Ideally clients should be monitored on subsequent visits to ensure that the message is continually reinforced that individuals should use a sterile needle for every injection and that they have enough supplies to enable this.

2 Service User Education

What

Services should provide education to clients on the following as a basic minimum:

1. Washing their hands with soap and water before injecting
2. The correct use of each item of injecting equipment
3. The risks of sharing injecting equipment
4. The correct methods of disposing of used injecting equipment

When

Ideally, education should be provided at every transaction i.e. assessment of new clients, regular reviews of clients, opportunistically, and in specific campaigns.

How

Ask leading questions rather than tell; ask for permission to give advice (and take no for an answer – the client will be more open in the long run); get clients to express their own concerns rather than imposing yours.

Use phrases that soften the delivery of advice, for example:

Abstract not personal ('we recommend'..)

Checking out ('I assume you know that'....)

Assuming the client knows but others don't ('lots of people only take'.....)

'Interesting fact'

Talk about products as well as techniques ('do you know why we give out the stericups?')

Staff with training in listening skills, in particular motivational interviewing techniques, should bear in mind that these techniques are very suitable for health promotion work in injecting equipment provision.

Training for staff

For details of training courses available for staff providing injecting equipment in Lothian, please see section 11 of above policy.

Resources

NHS Lothian leaflets 'Testing for Blood Borne Viruses' and 'Reducing your risk of overdose'. These leaflets for members of the public can be ordered free of charge from NHS Lothian Library and Resource Centre Tel 0131 536 9452.

BBV Resource pack for primary and community based staff: available on NHS Lothian intranet under healthcare/useful resources

Hepatitis C: what you need to know. Information pack for staff, available free of charge from the Hepatitis Managed Care Network Tel 0131 465 5491

Overdose DVD: Going Over, available free from Harm Reduction Team, Spittal Street Centre or call Exchange Supplies 01305 262244

Know the Score and www.scottishdrugservices.com

www.hepatitisscotlandc.org.uk

www.hepatitisscotlandb.org.uk

3 Distribution and returns

Encouraging returns

As of March 2010 there is no legal requirement for clients to return used injecting equipment before new equipment can be distributed. Nevertheless, it is good practice to encourage clients to return their used equipment. Furthermore, individuals can be prosecuted if they are found disposing of used injecting equipment in a way that could put members of the public at risk.

It may sometimes be difficult to encourage clients to return used equipment. They could be encouraged by stressing the dangers of used 'works' being found by children, and of other people reusing their discarded 'works'.

Services providing injecting equipment should be consistent in encouraging the return of used 'works'. This appears from experience to be the most successful approach.

Tips for increasing returns:

- Make sure they are all getting recorded

- Encourage everyone to take a bin
Asking *which* kind of bin a client wants (a clip, a black or a yellow bin) rather than *whether* they want one encourages client to take them away.

- Keep it on the agenda
Ask with every transaction whether the client has any to bring back

- Reinforce returning
Thank every client who makes returns so as to encourage them to keep doing it.

Secondary distribution

Clients who supply equipment to others should be encouraged to bring in the other injectors into the service so that they can benefit from advice and information.

Management of used equipment

Clients returning used equipment should be asked by staff to place returns into a large disposal unit personally. Staff should avoid handling used equipment.

4 Signposting and referring to other services

For details about where people can go for BBV testing, please refer to NHS Lothian's leaflet 'Testing for Blood Borne Viruses' available free of charge from NHS Lothian Library and Resource Centre Tel 0131 537 9337. For details about all Hepatitis C services within Lothian please see Lothian Directory of Hepatitis C services available from the Hepatitis C Managed Care Network Tel 0131 465 5450

Spittal Street Centre offers a range of health and social support services to injecting drug users (see Section 13 of above policy for details). Signposting and referral to the additional services noted in section 13 will depend on where your service is situated within Lothian. For assistance in developing referral pathways to these additional services please contact the Harm Reduction Team at Spittal Street Centre.

5 Getting client feedback on their needs

All IEP service providers should put in place mechanisms for identifying and responding to client feedback at regular intervals, at least annually. This will inform planning and development at Board level.

To this end, IEP service providers will be requested by the Harm Reduction Team at Spittal Street Centre to undertake surveys with a sample of your client population from time to time. These surveys are designed to assess the needs of IDU populations and sub-populations such as homeless service users, users of PIEDs, minority ethnic groups, where these exist in your area. The surveys will ask about models of care in general and the surveys will be analysed centrally. They will not cover client satisfaction with your particular service; this should be done individually or with support from the Harm Reduction Team.