

# **Management of risk from Sharps use in Healthcare**

## **Findings from HSE Inspections 2022-23**

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# Sharps Inspections



- 11 inspections carried out at NHS Organisations, to assess their management of sharps risk.
- To inform the Post Implementation Review for the Health and Safety (Sharp Instruments in Healthcare) Regulations 2013. ('The Sharps Regs')

# Sharps Inspections



- Contraventions identified in all eleven organisations inspected.
- Contraventions in seven (64%) of the inspections were so significant that formal improvement notices were served (in total 11 notices served across 7 organisations).
- Nine (82%) of the inspections identified specific contraventions to the Sharps regulations. These included: 5 breaches of Regulation 5 (avoid unnecessary use of sharps or use safer devices); 5 of Regulation 6 (provide information and training); and 4 of Regulation 7 (record and investigate sharps incident).

# Sharps Inspections

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- A post-inspection programme discussion with the inspectors involved led to the development of a number of characteristics of a good sharps risk management system. These included:
  - A clear policy on managing sharps risk
  - Close liaison between occupational health providers, health and safety, infection prevention and control (IPC) and procurement departments
  - Establishment of ‘steering groups’ including clinicians and members of the above departments
  - Strong and visible IPC team
  - Effective training including face to face element
  - Strong organisational leadership at Director level
- The absence of one or more of these characteristics are, in the opinion of the HSE inspectors involved, a key factor in the lack of compliance seen.

# Sharps Inspections



- The findings overall suggest that:
  - work remains to raise levels of compliance in respect of managing sharps risk.
  - while other legislation does apply, referring to the specific requirements of the Sharps Regulations provides a clear and practical focus on what needs to be done to enhance control of risk from sharps injuries.

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