



Harrow Parks Forum – Safe System of Work – Protection from Sharps

On occasions the operations that we carry out may bring us into contact with 'Sharps' e.g., broken glass, metal objects such as old tin cans and hypodermic syringes.

These are often found in areas such as shrub borders, leaf piles and rubbish containers.

All sharps are a potential source of infections if the sharp causes a puncture of the skin.

Infections such as Tetanus and Septicaemia will usually be prevented by good hygiene procedures i.e., washing the wound and using a clean dressing.

Where injury is caused by contact with an object such as a used syringe there is a potential for infection from blood carried diseases such as Hepatitis B. To protect yourself you should comply with the following:

- Avoid putting hands or arms into shrubs and borders and rubbish containers unless you have a clear view.
- Take care when handling bags that cannot be seen through. Hold away from body when carrying to avoid contact with sharps.
- Practice care when weeding, litter picking and collecting leaves and rubbish especially where sharps have been found before
- If you discover a sharp, notify other volunteers and avoid handling as much as possible, use gloves, a litter picker and the sharps box provided. Inform the event organiser.
- If you discover a needle Leave alone and report to an authorised staff member of Harrow Council for safe disposal.

- Should you puncture your skin with a needle: Stay calm. Encourage bleeding from the wound and ensure that the needle is collected for analysis and seek medical attention at once. Inform the event organiser and complete an accident/incident form.
- All full sharps boxes must be disposed of as medical waste.

Where it is known from a site specific risk assessment or through prior knowledge that hypodermic sharps are likely to be encountered in a specific site or area, any volunteer that is requested to work in the identified site or area will be provided with suitable protective equipment including gloves providing sharps protection.

Review

This Policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed annually following the Harrow Parks Forum AGM.

This policy was adopted at a meeting held on 14th September 2022

Signed by the Chair of Harrow Parks Forum:

Date – 09th September 2024

Date for next review: September 2026

This policy should be read in conjunction with HSFORM RA01 Risk Assessment Community Litter Picking Volunteers.