***Appendix 1b – EXAMPLE Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)***

***(For illustration purposes only)***

*Minimum Standards for Adaptation by Individual Pharmacies*

*This SOP will need to be re-drafted for each individual pharmacy.*

**SOP FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF NEEDLE STICK INJURIES in [XXXXXXXXXXXX] Pharmacy**

## Background

1.1 A sharps injury is an injury where a needle or other sharp object, contaminated with blood or other body fluid, penetrates the skin. This also includes human bites and scratches that break the skin.

1.2 The vast majority of sharps injuries are avoidable and occur when sharps are handled or disposed of in an unsafe manner.

1.3 To minimise the risk of contracting or spreading infections whilst working with sharps, precautions to prevent exposure to these must be taken whenever staff are handling or disposing of sharps.

1.4 The greatest occupational risk for transmitting a blood borne virus (BBV) is through an injury that breaks the skin, e.g. a needle-stick injury. The risk of acquiring a blood borne infection is increased after needle-stick injury when:

* The needle-stick injury is deep
* There is obvious blood present on the device
* The injury involves a sharp going directly into an artery or vein

1.5 Never remove any item from a sharps bin

1.6 Sealed sharps bins awaiting collection must be stored in a designated area ready to be sent for incineration according to Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations (2002).

1.7 If discarded sharps are found in the area around the pharmacy the XXXX council should be contacted on XXXXX XXXXXX to arrange for the area to be made safe.

## 2. Prevention

2.1 Employees should not handle used sharps which are not contained within a sealed sharps bin. Sharps bins must comply with British Standards BS7320 and United Nations Standards UN3291

2.2 Service Users must be encouraged to dispose of all sharps and other paraphernalia in a sharps bin.

2.3 Sharps bins must be sealed before being returned to the pharmacy.

2.4 Sharps bins must be collected regularly by XXXXX to ensure receptacles are not overfilled.

2.5 Under Health & Safety at work legislation, staff will be individually risk assessed and supported to accessing vaccination against Hepatitis B

2.6 Employees should not wear open shoes to prevent injury if sharps are accidentally dropped.

2.7 Service Users should be encouraged to only fill sharps bins to the fill line on the bin to ensure that no sharps “stick out” from the sharps bin.

2.8 If a discarded sharp is found in the pharmacy the area should be cleared and no one should enter the area until the sharp has been disposed of. The following process must be followed:

* Wear disposable gloves
* Place a sharps bin on a flat surface close to the discarded sharp
* Do not handle the sharp
* Do not attempt to re-sheath the needle
* Use tongs or pliers to pick up the sharp by the plastic end (not the sharp end) with the sharp end pointing away from your body
* Use the tongs or pliers to place the sharp into the sharps bin
* Remove and dispose of gloves
* Wash hands
* Complete an incident report

## 3. If a sharps injury occurs

3.1 Encourage the wound to bleed. This will help any potential infection to bleed from the wound.

3.2 Never rub or suck the injury.

3.3 Wash the area thoroughly with antiseptic soap and warm running water. Do not scrub the area. NB There is no need to use other solutions on exposed sites, e.g. do not use alcohol or bleach products. If antiseptic soap is not available, the area should be thoroughly washed using ordinary soap and water.

3.4 Cover the area where needle-stick has happened with a waterproof dressing.

3.4 Report the needle-stick injury to immediate manager and complete an incident/accident report according to local Incident and Accident Reporting Policy.

3.5 Report to A&E Department and tell them of needle-stick injury. A risk assessment and immunity assessment can be performed. Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) may be prescribed.

**Signed by the Pharmacist and ALL staff who may be involved in any aspect of the operation of the SOP.**

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