



Kimberley Needle and Syringe Program Procedure

1. Guiding Principles

1.1 Aim of the Needle and Syringe Program (NSP)

The aim of the NSP is to minimise the spread of hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HIV among people who inject drugs and the wider community. This is achieved through the provision of sterile injecting equipment, engaging with people who inject drugs (PWID) to provide harm minimisation health information and referral to medical services, and Kimberley Mental Health and Drug Services (KMHDS).

1.2 Hours of Operation

The Kimberley Needle and Syringe Program operates:

- 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week from emergency departments at all Kimberley hospitals.
- 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday from remote clinics and Broome Kimberley Mental Health Service.

2. Procedure

2.1 Distribution of Needles and Syringes

Needles and syringes are distributed in a packaged product – the 'Fitstick 5 Plus' – supplied by the Department of Health's the Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program (SHBBVP).

To support the principles of harm minimisation all NSP services will supply alcohol swabs and sterile water for distribution to clients.

Information on safe injecting practices, HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C transmission, and the safe disposal of injecting equipment will also be provided whenever needles and syringes are distributed.

When appropriate, NSP staff should engage in harm reduction brief intervention with NSP clients.

2.2 Cost of Needles and Syringes to the Client

Needles and syringes packaged in the 'Fitstick 5 Plus' are provided at no cost to clients of the NSP.

2.3 Return of Loose Needles and Syringes

The NSP does not accept used injecting equipment, it informs clients of appropriate disposal methods and disposal sites within their local area.

3. Definitions

Program Operators	Nursing, medical and reception staff on duty at Broome, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Kununurra and Wyndham hospitals, plus nursing and health workers at remote clinics and Broome Kimberley Mental Health Service distribute needles and syringes and disseminate associated information from the health service.
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4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Staff Education

All NSP staff must read and be familiar with the guidelines and policies of their program and material contained within the NSP Information Pack and NSP Online training provided by the SHBBVP.

All staff must complete the NSP Online Orientation and Training package.

All NSP staff will be kept informed of issues related to injecting drug use by the regional coordinator of the NSP program.

If specific staff training needs are identified, the regional coordinator will seek support from SHBBVP for training to meet these needs.

The NSP coordinator will conduct regular short training sessions with new staff to ensure the guidelines and objectives of the program are understood.

4.2. Workplace Safety

Staff must not touch or handle any used needles and syringes returned by clients.

Staff should read and adhere to Department of Health and WACHS policies for the management of needle stick injuries and other occupational exposure injuries.

Prior to commencement with the NSP, all staff are advised to be immunised against hepatitis B and ensure their tetanus immunisation is up-to-date.

5. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy document may constitute a breach of the WA Health system MP0031/16 Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

5.1 Client Confidentiality

Staff involved in the NSP must understand their obligation to safeguard information about their clients, to respect and protect the confidentiality of their clients, and whenever possible, prevent this being compromised by others for whatever intent or purpose.

Confidentiality must be maintained even when a client is known to be participating in other programs (e.g. pharmacotherapy program) or when the client or client's relatives are known to the provider.

De-identified client information collected on the number of Fitpacks dispensed is never to be shared with external agencies.

5.2. Staff Attitude

Staff are to adopt an empathetic, non-judgemental approach to clients, being sensitive to the likelihood of anxiety and/or apprehension of the client on approaching the NSP.

Particular sensitivity may need to be practised when staff are approached by Aboriginal clients, young people and, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Staff are encouraged to interact and build rapport with clients to create opportunities for the dissemination of education and/or information and referral.

5.3 Harm Reduction Brief Intervention

NSP staff should maintain a supply of appropriate pamphlets and information designed to provide health information to clients.

When appropriate, NSP staff will inform and educate clients on issues regarding injecting drug use (e.g. hepatitis C, safer injecting practices, disposal, treatment options) using available resources.

Information on safe injecting practices, HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C transmission, and the safe disposal of injecting equipment will be routinely given to clients when needle and syringes are provided..

When appropriate, NSP staff should engage in harm reduction brief intervention with NSP clients.

Questions that could be asked include:

- Do you know how to safely dispose of your used equipment?
- Do you need any advice about looking after your veins?
- Have you considered being tested for hepatitis C, hepatitis B or HIV?
- Would you like information on safer injecting?

5.4 Client Referral

Referral of clients to drug counselling and treatment agencies is only to occur when requested by the client, and the referral must be to agencies appropriate for the client's needs.

5.5 Juvenile Access to the NSP

Staff should actively encourage all juveniles accessing NSP to engage with appropriate youth drug services / workers by providing them an up-to-date list of relevant agencies

5.6 Access by Clients Undergoing Treatment Related to their Drug Use

Staff will provide equipment to clients who are known to be on a pharmacotherapy program if refusal to do so is likely to pose a greater health risk to the client.

Staff will provide information to clients in regards to poly-drug use and overdose prevention.

5.7. Client Responsibilities

Clients are expected to respect the intention of the NSP as a harm reduction and illness prevention program. Activities by clients that jeopardise the program, including disruptive behaviour and injecting in close proximity to the NSP, are not to be accepted.

6. Evaluation

6.1 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Program

All NSP staff are responsible for recording contacts with clients during which educational material or referral was given.

All NSP staff are responsible for keeping record of basic client demographics.

The NSP coordinator is responsible for reporting on service provision, disposal matters, operational matters, professional development and other general service matters as requested by the SHBBVP.

The NSP coordinator is responsible for conducting regular update sessions with staff and attending to issues emerging from the ongoing operation of the program.

7. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards:](#)

8. References

OD0554/14 [The Operation and Maintenance of Needle and Syringe Vending Machines \(NSVMS\)](#)

OD0553/14 [Provision of Sterile Needles and Syringes from Rural and Regional Hospitals to People Who Inject Drugs](#)

9. Related Policy Documents

Needle/ Syringe Distribution Policy, Kimberley Health Services Derby April 2001

10. Related WA Health System Policies

OD0554/14 [The Operation and Maintenance of Needle and Syringe Vending Machines \(NSVMS\)](#)

OD0553/14 [Provision of Sterile Needles and Syringes from Rural and Regional Hospitals to People Who Inject Drugs](#)

11. Policy Framework

[Public Health](#)

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