

West Essex Policy for the Disposal of Sharps

How should I dispose of used needles or sharps?

You should use a sharps bin to dispose of used needles or sharps. A sharps bin is a specially designed rigid box with a lid that's available on prescription (FP10 prescription form) from your GP or pharmacist. When full, the box can be collected for disposal by your local authority. Where it is custom and practice for GP Practices to take back sharps bins from their patients this may continue for the convenience of patients¹.

Used needles

Used needles must not be bent or broken before disposal, and you must never try to recap a needle.

Using a needle clipper

You can use a clipper to snap off a needle or the sharp part of a syringe. The needle stays inside the clipper. However, clippers aren't designed to remove lancet needles. These are needles used by people with [diabetes](#) to check their blood glucose levels, and are designed to be used just once before disposal. Clippers are available for free on prescription if you're exempt from charges – for example, if you have diabetes.

Using your sharps bin

You can use your sharps bin to dispose of medical supplies such as:

- needles
- syringes
- lancets used with finger-pricking devices
- clippers

Put needles or similar medical supplies into the sharps bin immediately after using them and don't try to take them out again. Only fill the bin up to where it says "Do not fill above this line".

While your sharps bin is in use or waiting to be collected, keep it in a safe place so it's not a risk to other people and is out of the reach of children.

Disposing of your full sharps bin

Arrangements for disposing of full sharps bins vary from area to area. If you have a medical condition, such as diabetes, and use needles to self-medicate at home, your local council may be responsible for collecting your full sharps bin. You can find out more from your local council's website. Local councils can charge for this service.

Where it is custom and practice for GP Practices to take back sharps bins from their patients this may continue for the convenience of patients¹.

Don't use other bins

You shouldn't put used needles or other sharps:

- in your household waste bin or any other general refuse bin
- in a container that's no longer needed, such as a drinks can or bottle

¹ MOPB 26th July 2018.

Needles can cause injuries. Used needles can carry blood-borne viruses that may be passed on to other people.

Viruses that can be passed on through contact with needles include:

- [HIV](#)
- [hepatitis B](#)
- [hepatitis C](#)

Needles for medication

If you use needles to inject medication, it's your responsibility to dispose of them safely. For example, if you have:

- diabetes and use a syringe, injection pen or insulin pen for regular insulin injections
- a severe allergy for which you may need to inject adrenaline (epinephrine) from a preloaded syringe or injection pen



Local Council's Contact Details

Uttlesford District Council

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/clinicalwaste>

Contact Recycling and Waste

- Telephone: 01799 510510
- [Email Recycling and Waste](#)
- Complete an [online enquiry form](#)

Harlow Council

<http://www.harlow.gov.uk/clinical-waste>

If you have sharps in an FP10 sharps box, issued by your doctor, for disposal please return them to your doctor's surgery or as instructed by your healthcare professional.

A lot of information regarding our services can be found on this website. If you require further help, please contact or **visit us**:

- Harlow Council, Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, Harlow, Essex CM20 1WG
- Tel: **01279 446655**
- Email: contact@harlow.gov.uk

Epping Forest District Council

<http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/residents/your-environment/recycling-and-waste/clinical-waste>

Contact us

- Telephone: 01992 564608
- Email: erefuse@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
- Or you can write to us at: Recycling & Waste, Environment & Street Scene, Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ