

Ref: FOI/CAD/ID 3806

Please reply to:
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14 March 2017

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I am writing in response to your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in relation to the recycling of medical aids.

This request concerns the recycling of medical aids by your hospital trust.

1) Please confirm whether your trust recycles medical aids (such as crutches, wheelchairs etc.) for reuse by other patients.

2) If yes, please provide information on the number of medical aids that were recycled in the 2016 calendar year, broken down by the type of medical aid recycled.

3)

a) Please provide a copy of your trust's current guidance on recycling medical aids.

b) Please also provide a copy of your trust's guidance on the recycling of medical aids returned to your trust from other NHS authorities.

c) If you do not have an exact 'copy' of this guidance, can you please provide a description of the policies requested in 3a) and 3b)

4) If you do not currently recycle medical aids, please provide a copy of your trust's guidance on why you do not recycle medical aids, or the minutes of the meeting at which it was decided that your trust would not recycle medical aids.

5) If you do not currently recycle medical aids, please provide all information held concerning current or future trials of this policy within your trust.

1. No
2. Not applicable
3. Not applicable
4. Documents attached ISA0074 & ISA0076

QUALITY & GOVERNANCE INTERNAL SAFETY ALERT

Incident Reporting – involving Medical Devices

ATTENTION ALL USERS OF MEDICAL DEVICES

Issue Date: 4th July 2016

Reference Number : ISA0076

All Crutches/Walking Aids – Single Patient Use Medical Devices

Scope

All staff issuing Walking Aids.

Background

Following the previous Internal Safety Alert on Walking Aids (ISA0074) the Trust has been involved in an incident where a walking stick issued to a patient has failed.

Although this incident was several months after the patient was discharged into community care and were able to trace the issue of the device. We were however unable to trace the origin and history of the device, i.e. was the walking stick new, when it was purchased, who it was purchased from or had it been previously used to another patient.

This incident resulted in the patient being admitted for further reparative procedures.

Conclusion

The Medical Devices Committee has discussed this at length, to which the conclusion was that to ensure patient safety, all walking aids **must** be treated as **Single Patient Use** items.

Action

Ensure **all staff**, are aware that all walking aids **must not** be re-issue to patients.

Any walking aids returned from patients should be gratefully received, before being quarantined for disposal through re-cycling.

Please ensure all staff have read and understood the use of walking aids safety notice and complete the local signature sheet below.

QUALITY & GOVERNANCE INTERNAL SAFETY ALERT

Incident Reporting – involving Medical Devices

ATTENTION ALL USERS OF MEDICAL DEVICES

Issue Date: 20th April 2016

Reference Number : ISA0074

Crutches/Walking Aids – Single Patient Use Medical Devices

Scope

All staff issuing Elbow and Gutter Crutches.

Background

Investigating an incident, where following knee surgery the patient was issued a set of Elbow Crutches which subsequently collapsed when the patient bore weight on them at home.

The incident occurred when the handle split around the securing rivet, causing the crutch to shorten suddenly. Luckily the handle didn't fail completely and patient was able to balance and bearing weight on their other leg.

Had the handle failed completely, this could have added to the risk of further injury.

The investigation revealed that these crutches were **not new**. It also became apparent that there are differing practices across the Trust regarding the recycle/re-use of crutches returned from patients.

Crutches are load bearing devices and once issued to a patient it is impossible for the Trust to control their use and care. Equally it is not feasible to assess the safety and suitability for the device to be issued to another patient (re-used).

Therefore all crutches **must** be treated as **Single Patient Use** items.

Action

Ensure **all staff**, are aware that Elbow & Forearm Crutches **must not** be re-used.

Any Elbow and Gutter Crutches returned from patients should be gratefully received, before being quarantined for disposal through re-cycling.

Please ensure all staff have read and understood the use of crutches safety notice and complete the local signature sheet below.

5. Not applicable