



Primary Care *Shared Connection*

October 2024

Self-harm objects within practices

The ICB supports practices by analysing themes from Significant Events. On some occasions, themes or single events are identified that require prompt sharing to all Primary Care practices to enable learning.

Particular Interest

All Staff Practice Managers GP's Nursing AHP Clerical Other

Summary

- A 15-year-old looked after child with a medical history of mental health illness and self-harm behaviours attended the surgery for a clinical appointment with their carer support.
- Prior to the appointment, the child used the bathroom at the practice
- On exiting the bathroom, they had new self-harm cuts to their arm
- It was identified they had made the cuts, using glass from a picture frame which had been hanging in the bathroom.

Impact

- Physical cuts and actual harm to the child
- Increased stress to the child which resulted in challenging behaviour after the appointment
- Increased stress to the carer and/or family member
- Worry and concern to the practice staff
- Potential for patient and staff harm when managing the resulting challenging behaviour
- Potential for glass to be used as a weapon towards staff and other patients

Identified learning

- The picture frame had been in the bathroom for many years, without being recognised as an object for potential self-harm.
- Improvements in communication processes between services when supporting patients who are at risk of self-harm.
- The need for all practice staff to have awareness of patients with additional needs, the individual risks associated with the patient and the support that may be required when visiting the practice
- Consider patient flag on clinical system for staff awareness

Suggested actions

- Please take a 'fresh eyes' view of the objects that you have within the practice which are accessible to patients, carers and loved ones which have the potential to be used to cause harm
- Undertake a risk assessment of objects in patient accessible areas
- Consider how best to share internal communication among staff regarding the attendance of vulnerable patients into the practice
- Consider how any relevant care plans are shared between providers as appropriate and how these are accessible to relevant staff within the practice.

For further information and support contact:

Primary Care Quality:
Southampton: sarahrochford@nhs.net
Hampshire: hiowicb-hsi.hampshire.quality.primarycare@nhs.net
Portsmouth: stephen.oroio@nhs.net
Isle of Wight: leo.harverson1@nhs.net