

Compliance Audit Study: NHS Trust in London

Background

A NHS Trust that provides primarily Mental Health services, but with fast expansion into other areas of healthcare provision, was being provided with waste disposal services through a broker. In line with Department of Health Guidelines, the Trust wished to ensure that its waste was being managed in full compliance with waste legislation.

The estate

The client's estate consists of a wide variety of buildings housing not only their own services, but also those provide by other healthcare bodies including GPs surgeries and dental practices.

The facilities produce small amounts of infectious waste with the majority being black bag and offensive waste. Buildings often have limited space for either internal or external storage.

Waste collections are controlled by a healthcare waste service provider acting as a broker.



Findings

Whilst in general, the management of waste was found to be compliant at the sites, the audit identified a number of areas of concern that had the potential for enforcement action. Key amongst these was the incorrect application of paperwork and records for both hazardous and non-hazardous waste with the waste producer being incorrectly identified and records not properly maintained. There was also found to be a general lack of understanding amongst staff not only about compliance issues, but also about best practice in the management of healthcare waste. Consequently, the Trust was incurring excessive cost over which it had very little control.

In common with many large organisations, there was very little consideration given to the waste hierarchy and the need to minimise waste to landfill to avoid future cost liabilities.

The audit highlighted the widespread problem where for hazardous healthcare waste in particular, staff are unaware of the need for consignment documentation to be signed and retained by a site representative.

What next?

A range of recommendations have provided the Trust with opportunities to bring the various areas of concern into compliance in a practical and cost effective manner taking account of the Trusts key priorities. This includes staff training that will be carried out by 360 Environmental as well as a revision of consignment procedures with the broker and waste services provider.

Further information

More information on 360 Environmental's compliance audit services can be found at:
<http://www.360environmental.co.uk/complianceaudits>

