**Supply of Foil**

Foil is to be introduced across Hampshire Level 2 and 3 needle exchange sites. This will allow needle exchange sites in Hampshire to provide clients with foil for them to use to smoke rather than inject. The supply of foil was legalised on 5th September 2014.

The foil is used to heat a drug and then the vapours are inhaled/ smoked. The foil to be supplied has been manufactured without oil. Most household foil has a layer of vegetable oil used in production which although not hazardous requires burning off before use. Some clients have reported that using household foil has irritated their lungs.

The foil is used to heat up the drug to produce the vapours and also to form a pipe to inhale the drug vapours through. Frontier who provides the foil have a YouTube site called exchangesupplies.org. On this site you can view two videos:

1. How to make a great foil pipe (with 45 degree angle tip)
2. How to make a great foil pipe with a straight/flat end

# Advantages of smoking versus injecting

Smoking heroin is substantially less risky than injecting because it eliminates the risk of:

* Contracting Hep B, Hep C and HIV through injecting
* Abscesses, Cellulitis or Phlebitis
* Thrombosis (Vein Collapse)
* Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and Pulmonary Embolism (PE)
* Gangrene
* Fungal Infections
* Septicaemia
* Endocarditis
* Ulcers or Arterial Damage
* Reduces the risk of overdose when compared to injecting

Although smoking drugs from foil will prevent many infections and other hazards from injection, it does carry other risks including bacterial infections such as anthrax and tuberculosis and can cause asthma like breathing difficulties.

Feedback from clients about other positive impacts of smoking over injecting includes:

* More sociable
* Not having needles around (parent)
* Giving veins a rest
* Being offered choice expect injecting

**Conditions of supply (legislation)**

Those providing foil must have a clear set of actions for engaging a person in treatment. This might include:

* Discussion about treatment
* Signposting to treatment services (referral form is available on PharmOutcomes)
* Providing relevant information (harm minimisation leaflet)

When foil is provided as part of the treatment plan, this is often during initial stages of treatment when a client is moving from injecting heroin to stopping. It may also be used if the client is at risk of relapse.

**What you can do to support the appropriate supply of foil**

* Ensure all staff are aware of respiratory complications and be able to provide advice and signpost
* Be able to communicate the benefits of smoking versus injecting but also the risks associated with smoking
* Encourage clients to switch to smoking from injecting
* Encourage client to stop smoking tobacco (if they also smoke cigarettes)
* Be able to provide information on drug treatment services and signpost as appropriate
* Ask the client how much foil they need. You should provide it to them by number of sheets, not number of books. Each book contains 50 sheets, and this is more than one client should need at one time.

## Behavioural change

* Many people do not want to move to smoking as an alternative route of drug use to injecting, and exerting undue pressure would be counterproductive in that it might discourage them from attending the needle exchange for clean injecting equipment.
* Moving to smoking is a big step for some people. If someone is having problems with their veins then smoking, even just once a day, rather than injecting can help give those veins a bit of much needed rest.
* Respect and understanding of each person’s individual situation is essential to building rapport and engaging injecting drug users into services.
* The foil packs are useful tools to encourage discussion and provide an ideal opportunity to give essential advice. Having the foil packs available immediately makes raising the issue of smoking easier and engages people’s interest.

## Overdose risk

* Smoking heroin significantly reduces the risk of overdose because the dose can be titrated more safely than if the whole amount is injected. However, overdose is still possible if other depressant drugs have been consumed at the same time.
* Discussing the foil gives another opportunity to highlight the potential risk of overdose and give the individual a way of significantly reducing that risk.

**Data Recording and Ordering**

Recording of supplies of foil will be on PharmOutcomes and the NSP Supply (Level 2&3) service.

Foil is to be ordered via the Inclusion order form as per all other pick and mix equipment. On these orders please make sure you enter the pharmacies full address, including postcode.

**Further Information**

<http://www.injectingadvice.com/v4/index.php/articles/equipment/690-tips-for-supplying-foil>

**Sources of information**

Public Health England

[www.nta.nhs.uk](http://www.nta.nhs.uk)

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)