

HPC8 Obtain and handle forensic samples

OVERVIEW

This standard is about health care professionals obtaining intimate and non-intimate forensic samples from individuals. It includes handling, labelling and storing forensic samples in a manner that will prevent contamination and allow for the samples to later be admissible as evidence. This standard may be carried out during a clinical examination of an individual. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies. Version No 1

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

1. The principles of valid consent and the ways in which an individual's ability to give consent may be compromised
2. How to establish the individual's best interests where there is doubt about the validity of consent
3. The consequences and available options when an individual refuses to give consent
4. When and how to obtain consent from a person with parental responsibility
5. The rules for obtaining consent from children and young people to allow intimate sample evidence to later be admissible as evidence
6. The rules for obtaining consent from people with mental health needs to allow sample evidence to later be admissible as evidence
7. How to communicate clearly and in ways that promote understanding
8. The different types of needs, concerns and beliefs individuals may have
9. How to keep accurate, legible and complete records in accordance with legal, professional and organisational requirements and guidelines,
10. Who is permitted to obtain intimate and non-intimate forensic samples
11. Who can provide authorisation for obtaining intimate and non-intimate forensic samples

12. Who should and should not be present when obtaining intimate forensic samples
13. People who may act as an appropriate adult, in accordance with national legislation and codes of practice
14. How to obtain different types of intimate and non-intimate forensic samples
15. How to recognise the need for obtaining additional samples e.g. indications of suspicious circumstances
16. How to prevent contamination of forensic samples
17. How to label forensic samples in accordance with legal and organisational requirements and guidelines
18. How to store types of forensic samples
19. How and why other items need to be retained e.g. control samples
20. When and how to obtain a specialist forensic opinion
21. Safe handling techniques for equipment and materials used when obtaining forensic samples

National legislation and codes of practice governing obtaining forensic samples from detained persons

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to do the following:

1. confirm that authorisation for obtaining intimate forensic samples has been obtained and recorded in the custody record
2. explain the procedure for obtaining intimate or non-intimate forensic samples to the individual
3. communicate with the individual clearly and in ways that promote understanding
4. explain your own role and its scope, your responsibilities and accountability
5. respect the individuals privacy, beliefs and dignity as far as practicable
6. confirm the individual's rights and wishes and obtain their written valid consent
7. ensure that individuals who refuse to give consent understand the possible consequences and options e.g. in some circumstances forensic samples may be taken by a person who is not medically qualified
8. ensure a suitable location and resources to obtain forensic samples

9. arrange for the presence of an appropriate adult in situations where intimate samples are to be obtained from:
 - a) an individual with a mental health disorder or learning difficulties
 - b) a child or young person who has consented to the appropriate adult's presence
 10. provide advice to police officers/staff where necessary, regarding the type and number of samples required and how they should be handled
 11. explain what is required of the individual and expected sensations or discomfort they may experience
 12. use methods to obtain forensic samples in accordance with legal and organisational requirements and guidelines
 13. take all possible steps to prevent contamination e.g.
 - a) use the appropriate personal protective clothing
 - b) change gloves when sampling different body orifices
 - c) handle samples as little as possible
 - d) avoid talking, coughing or sneezing over unsealed samples
 14. retain any related items which may later be required for further analysis e.g. control samples
 15. seal and clearly label samples in accordance with legal and organisational requirements and guidelines
 16. ensure the forensic samples are stored in the required conditions
 17. ensure a specialist forensic opinion is obtained where required
- keep accurate, legible and complete records in accordance with legal, professional and organisational requirements and guidelines

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This National Occupational Standard was developed by Skills for Health. This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004): Dimension: HWB7 Interventions and treatments