

Notice of Motion (Full Council)

Title of Motion: **Tackling drug-related litter – amnesty for sharps bins**

Date of Council meeting the motion is to be submitted to: 4 November 2025

Proposer: Councillor William Gill

Seconder: Councillor Richard Jeffcoat

Motion:

“Council notes with concern the ongoing issue of discarded needles and other sharps in public spaces across Sandwell, particularly in areas of Tipton where drug-related litter has been repeatedly reported by residents and cleansing teams. This poses a clear risk to public health, street cleanliness, and community safety.

Council further notes that while existing reporting and removal systems for drug-related litter are effective in responding to incidents, they are reactive in nature. Other local authorities across the UK have successfully trialled or implemented secure “amnesty” sharps bins, allowing for the safe and anonymous disposal of used needles. These schemes have demonstrated reductions in discarded sharps and improvements in local safety perceptions when implemented alongside strong community engagement and public health messaging.

Council recognises the work already carried out by Sandwell’s Public Health team, Environmental Services, and Safer Sandwell Partnership to tackle the harms associated with drug use and believes that exploring a preventative measure such as amnesty bins could complement existing harm-reduction and waste strategies.

Council therefore resolves to call on the Leader and Cabinet to:

1. Commission a feasibility study into the installation and management of secure sharps amnesty bins in areas where drug use and discarded needles are frequently reported.

2. Include the following information in the feasibility study –
 - Analysis of existing data on reports and removals of discarded needles across Sandwell.
 - Assessment of suitable bin types, locations, servicing models, and cost implications.
 - Consideration of legal, environmental, and public-safety requirements for safe waste handling and disposal.
 - Engagement with relevant partners including Public Health, Environmental Services, West Midlands Police, local NHS drug and alcohol services, pharmacies, and community safety groups.
 - Recommendations for monitoring, evaluation, and performance measures, including community impact and safety outcomes.
3. Report the findings of the feasibility to the relevant Cabinet Member and scrutiny boards for consideration of any required next steps.
4. Request officers to immediately strengthen communication with residents about how to safely report and dispose of discarded needles, to reduce risk and improve awareness while the feasibility work is undertaken.”