



**Ex-army medic Francesca Burrows currently runs a Needlesticks and Biochemical Awareness course on behalf of Call for the Wild. Here she explains why learning how to protect yourself at work is absolutely vital.**

I left the army two years ago after a 12 year period. Everybody knows a life on the battlefield is tough and learning how to survive in incredibly difficult situations is part of the job. I came back to Wales with some good life skills and I'm really keen to use my experience to teach people how to protect themselves while in the workplace.

I'm really passionate about safety and know there are lots of jobs out there where people are at risk of danger at work – whether it's carrying heavy goods or being exposed to life threatening infections. That's why ensuring excellent health and safety practice is critical.

In social housing, it's really important people like tradespeople who are going into properties know how to manage risks and handle objects in the correct way to avoid contamination from diseases such as Hepatitis B and HIV.

While doing some research for courses, I was surprised to see many needlestick and biochemical awareness courses are quite short and focus on theory. **Speaking as an ex-soldier, the skill involved for checking needles is the same for checking for roadside bombs so a practical training session is absolutely key.**

At Call of the Wild – which is the training company I work for- I have developed a course that gives a really realistic overview of what checking a house for needles and sharps actually involves. I don't scaremonger – I just set up a void property how a person may find it during a normal day at work, with old furniture, rubbish and sharps scattered around the place.

Ahead of the course starting I'll plant exposed needles around the property. **Then all delegates are given a practical training session in a controlled environment** so they can learn how to prevent contamination and handle sharps and needles in a safe way.

Following this, they are split into teams and are given a room each to find as many needles and sharps as possible.

I aim to make the day as real to life as possible. One of my techniques is to put fake blood on delegates' gloves. If there is fake blood on their hands with they remove them they'll instantly know they haven't taken them off correctly. In a real life scenario, removing gloves in the wrong way can result in contamination and life-long consequences – so it's important they learn this during a training session.

At the end of the day we talk through experiences, and I show them where all the needles were hidden. They don't normally find them all!

I work with Housing Associations across Wales, and have had some really good feedback. Ultimately it's my job to prevent danger so I'm glad I can use my army experience in a positive way.

## 4301 - Needlestick and Biochemical Awareness

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### Venue: Seven Sisters, Neath

Everyday people are at risk of Hep B and other blood borne diseases, especially those that are in high risk roles such as tradespeople and those clearing void properties. A high percentage of people are exposed to or work with sharp objects and bodily fluids but unfortunately not everyone is educated on how to handle these hazards. It is becoming more common that people are coming across these hazards in their commercial areas, schools, parks and work place car parks. Therefore knowing how to handle these objects, prevent contamination and recognize symptoms in yourself or others is vital.

### COURSE OVERVIEW

The course is a one day course consisting of a theory and practical element. Due to the severity these hazards can cause we do a thorough practical session in a live void property to teach delegates the skills required when dealing with these substances and dangerous equipment.

### COURSE STRUCTURE

The content of the course will cover how to deal with the following:

- » Awareness and Risk avoidance
- » Infections
- » Legislation
- » Hazard reporting procedures
- » Incident reporting procedure
- » Safe handling, moving and removal of hazards

### BOOK ONLINE OR CALL:

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