

Harrow Shared Lives Scheme

Policy & Procedure No. 31

Handling Medicines

The Harrow Shared Lives Scheme enables you to take responsibility for your own medication wherever possible. However if this is not possible we will ensure that Shared Lives (SL) Carers understand the principles behind the safe handling of medication, as well as the service's procedures for the control, administration, recording, safe keeping, handling and disposal of medicines.

How will this happen?

Information about any medication you require, the extent to which you can take responsibility for this and/or any assistance you need will be included in your Service User Plan. A risk assessment will be completed (and reviewed regularly) if this helps to establish how much responsibility you can take and ensures your safety.

If medicines (prescribed and non-prescribed) are kept at the SL Carer's home, they will be stored in a lockable container/in a suitable place that is not affected by extreme heat or moisture. This may include asking you to bring your medicines in a suitable container even if you are responsible for them yourself, in order to make sure that other people in the house cannot take them, whether by accident or on purpose. If medicines need to be kept cool they will be kept in a clearly marked container on the top shelf of the refrigerator.

SL Carers will receive training about the general principles of handling medicines before they begin any SL arrangements. They will also receive specific training from a competent health professional about your own medication or medical procedures, when this is appropriate.

This training and subsequent assessment of their competence will be documented.

SL Carers will not administer any non-prescribed medication or homely remedies or dressings without the guidance of a health professional, unless this has been explicitly included in your Service User Plan, or in the case of first aid, if they have been specially trained for this.

SL Carers will keep a record of any medicines, which are stored for you and the date they are returned to you. If your SL Carer(s) are assisting you with taking medication, or with helping you remember to do this, they will record details of which medicines are taken and when and the dosage. They will also record occasions when you have missed a dose and the reason for this or when the medicine may have been ineffective, for example, if you have been vomiting. They will be provided with suitable charts or forms (Medicine Administration Records) on which all these details can be recorded and separate records will be kept for each person they are supporting. The information may be shared with your GP or other relevant health professionals. They will also let your GP know how you are responding to medication, in particular any unexpected changes that may be due to side effects of the medication.

SL Carers will only administer medicines if they are in their original containers or in a dosage system used by your pharmacist and clearly labelled with your name, the dosage, instructions and expiry date. Medicines prescribed for you will not be given to any other person or used for a different purpose. If any mistakes are made in administering medicines your SL Carer will report this to your GP straight away and will take any remedial action the GP advises.

SL Carers will return any surplus, unwanted, damaged or out-of-date medicines to a pharmacist for destruction, if they have been storing these on your behalf and will record this. (If someone dies they will wait 7 days before returning their medicines.) They will also make use of advice and guidance from a pharmacist, when appropriate, if they have queries about your medication.

Arrangements for administration of your medication (including any risk assessments) will be reviewed regularly when your Service User Plan is reviewed, or more frequently if required.

Your dignity and privacy and preferences will be respected when you are given or taking medicines. You have a right to give or withhold consent for any medical treatment or examinations. SL Carer(s) understand that they cannot do this for on your behalf and nor can anyone else. If you are unable to make decisions or give informed consent yourself, this will

be discussed with your doctor or dentist (and your representative, when appropriate) to agree a way forward that is within the law and in your best interests. In these situations we will follow guidance in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice.

See these other policies and procedures and documents for further information on:

- Medication Administration Records
- Record keeping
- Health and safety
- First aid
- Risk assessment and risk management
- Making choices and decisions
- Service User Plan
- Individual planning, monitoring and review
- Staying healthy and making use of health resources
- Training and development