

Harrow Shared Lives Scheme Policy & Procedure No. 32

Food Safety and Nutrition

The Harrow Shared Lives Scheme promotes and safeguards the health, safety and welfare of people involved in Shared Lives (SL) arrangements through its safe working practices. Food is an important part of everybody's daily lives and needs to be handled safely in order to prevent diseases or infections.

How would this happen?

A good balanced diet is important for your general health, while eating the food that you like and enjoy is just as important for your sense of well-being. Your SL Carer will support you in leading the kind of life that you want.

Information about which foods you like or dislike and any cultural, religious or dietary needs will be included in your Service User Plan. You will be offered a variety of foods at mealtimes and will be able to help yourself to snacks and drinks when you want. Your SL Carer(s) may encourage you to eat well, when appropriate, but the final choice about what you eat will be yours.

If you require help with eating and drinking, your SL Carer(s) will provide this in a sensitive and unhurried way that maintains your dignity and enables you to do as much as possible for yourself.

Diseases and infections can be spread through the preparation, cooking and storage of food and the way that equipment is cleaned. SL Carers will be provided with training and information so that they understand:

- good practice in handling foods
- how diseases and infections are spread and how to reduce the risk of this

- that the most effective way to control the spread of diseases and infections is through washing hands. (There is more about this in our policy on Communicable Diseases and Infection Control)

Anyone in a SL arrangement who is involved in preparing or cooking food will be expected to wash and dry his or her hands:

- before starting to prepare foods
- after touching raw meat
- after touching the bin or handling rubbish
- after touching pets or handling their feeding bowls
- after going to the toilet or helping another person to do so
- after helping another person with their care needs.

Other precautions include:

- separating raw meat from other foods at all times – for example, using separate chopping boards and storage containers and not allowing meat to touch or drip on to other foods in the fridge
- cooking foods until piping hot, including leftovers
- keeping worktops and chopping boards and other equipment clean
- storing foods correctly and monitoring the temperatures of fridges and freezers
- using foods before their 'best by' or 'use by' dates.

If you are involved in the preparation and cooking of food as part of your SL arrangement, your SL Carer will explain and encourage and help you to follow these safe practices too.

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

- Accidents and dangerous occurrences
- Communicable diseases and Infection control
- Control of substances hazardous to health
- Making choices and decisions
- Risk assessment and risk management
- Health and safety
- Safe working practices (including moving and handling)
- Service User Plan
- Individual planning, monitoring and review
- Training and development