

Harrow Shared Lives Scheme Policy & Procedure No. 29

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

The Harrow Shared Lives Scheme promotes and safeguards the health, safety and welfare of everyone working or using it, through its safe working practices. Using chemicals or other hazardous substances can put people's health at risk and the law requires us to control the ways that people in our office(s) or involved in Shared Lives arrangements may be exposed to them.

How would this happen?

Care must be taken when handling any chemicals or substances that may be poisonous or bad for your health. These are known as hazardous substances and manufacturers are required to provide special warning labels on the packaging or containers. Wherever possible the use of these hazardous substances will be avoided in Shared Lives (SL) arrangements and in our office(s).

SL Workers and SL Carers will be provided with training and information that enables them to:

- understand which substances may be dangerous and the importance of avoiding their use if possible
- recognise the warning labels and their different meanings
- assess the risks within Shared Lives arrangements and take action to reduce these
- know how to deal with hazardous substances if their use is necessary
- understand the importance of explaining the warning labels and dangers to people who are in Shared Lives arrangements

When use of a hazardous substance is necessary:

- it will be stored in its original container;
- it will be kept in a locked cupboard or a secure place away from children or other people who may not understand the dangers.
- the instructions for use will be read and followed (including how to deal with accidental exposure).

- protective equipment such as gloves or masks will be used when required.

Working practices will be regularly monitored through supervision and reviews and visits to Shared Lives arrangements.

Bacteria and other micro-organisms can also be hazardous to health. The procedures for dealing with these are included in our policies for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control and Food Safety and Nutrition.

Medicines are hazardous to health if taken in the wrong way or wrong amount, or by the wrong person. The policy on Handling Medicines explains how these risks are managed.

Within the Scheme's office(s) the Manager will take responsibility for ensuring that COSHH Regulations and relevant Approved Codes of Practice are followed. This will include completing COSHH risk assessments when necessary, updating these at least once every year and informing workers about them. If hazardous chemicals are in use, the manufacturers' safety data sheets will be obtained and stored in a COSHH file and workers will know where to find this.

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

- Accidents and dangerous occurrences
- Communicable diseases and infection control
- First Aid
- Food safety and nutrition
- Handling medicines
- Health and safety
- Risk assessment and risk management
- Safe working practices (including moving and handling)
- Training and development