

KENT SHARED LIVES Policies & Procedures

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(10) Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

It is the policy of Kent shared lives to safeguard the health and well-being of both its shared lives hosts and the individual placed with them. As part of this policy shared lives will ensure that its employees and shared lives hosts understand which chemical and biological substances may be hazardous to health, that the use of such substances is minimised and that where the use of such substances is unavoidable, its employees and shared lives hosts have the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with such substances safely. Shared lives will support shared lives hosts to ensure that the people placed with them understand the dangers of any chemical/biological substances and that those substances are kept in a safe place.

Explanatory Note:

A “substance hazardous to health” is any material or mixture, which is used at a place of work (including in the home of the shared lives host), and which could prove harmful to a person’s health through **absorption** through the skin, **ingestion** through the mouth or **inhalation** through breathing.

CHEMICAL HAZARDS

All these substances, when kept in their original containers, will be marked with one of the following symbols.

International symbols



All products with such symbols should have a data sheet which can be provided by the manufacturer. These will provide all appropriate information to deal with accidents, over exposure and so on.

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Procedure

Shared lives will:

1. Ensure that the use of chemical or biological substances hazardous to health is minimised both in the workplace and in the home of the shared lives host.
2. Ensure that all employees and shared lives hosts through induction/ pre approval training understand which chemical substances may be hazardous to health, the need to minimise the use of such substances and where the use of such substances is unavoidable have the knowledge and skills to deal with such substances safely. Employees and shared lives hosts should in particular understand that where the use of a chemical substance is unavoidable :
 - The substance must be stored safely in a locked or secured cupboard away from any child or person who may not understand the dangers of the substance
 - The substance must be stored in its original container.
 - They must read all instructions and use the substance only as directed.
 - They must ensure they have been given suitable and sufficient information; instruction and training for safe use.
 - They must be aware of the potential health risks or dangers and what to do if the substance is accidentally ingested, inhaled or absorbed through the skin.
3. Where the use of a hazardous chemical is unavoidable and required, shared lives will provide the employee or shared lives host with gloves, aprons or any other protective equipment necessary to minimise.

BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

The most common biological hazards are blood borne viruses such as hepatitis B or HIV.

Procedure

1. Shared lives will ensure that all employees and shared lives hosts follow the practice of 'universal precaution' as set out in the shared lives policy and procedure on 'communicable diseases and infection control'
2. Shared lives will provide access to training and learning materials in order to ensure that employees and shared lives hosts understand the importance of the practice of 'universal precaution' and have the skills and knowledge to work safely to minimise the risk of infection from blood borne viruses.

DRUGS AND MEDICATION

Shared lives hosts are often responsible for supporting the person placed with them to administer their own medication or in some cases the direct administration of medication. Any drug or medication is potentially hazardous.

1. Shared lives will ensure, through access to training/learning materials that shared lives hosts have the skills and knowledge to safely administer and handle medication.

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2. Shared lives will ensure through careful support and monitoring that shared lives hosts follow the shared lives policy and procedure on the control, administration, self administration, recording, safekeeping, handling and disposal of medicines.

Information: [Health and Safety Executive - Universal precautions](#)