



Keeping Families **Safe** in the Home

A guide for anyone who works with
children and families

Look out for this symbol  which will give you helpful guidance on what dangers there can be in the home and how to develop a safe plan.

What can we do to keep children safe from harmful household items?

It is essential for **any harmful household items** as well as alcohol, drugs and prescribed medication to be safely stored.



Undertake a full risk assessment.

Did you know...



A survey by the UK's National Poisons Information Service (NPIS) highlighted 1,486 cases involving **laundry and dishwasher liquid capsules** between May 2009 and July 2012 - the vast majority involving children under the age of five.

The NPIS reported that there were 139 enquiries about nicotine being ingested in 2014, compared with 29 in 2012 and only 36 in the previous five years combined.

E-cigarette usage has increased significantly in recent years. The liquid found in e-cigarettes can be very harmful. A total of 204 enquiries to the NPIS were received during 2013-14, more than the total number of enquiries about these products in the previous six years. Children aged less than five years were involved in 22% of the enquiries.



Philip Le Shirley, Product Safety Adviser at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, said:

*"Nicotine is a toxic substance and poisonous to children. This is why it is important to treat electric cigarettes and their components in the same way as you would household chemicals, by storing them **out of the sight and reach** of children."*

Undertake a full risk assessment of the home

What are the risks? Have you considered...

There have been **17 Serious Case Reviews** involving the ingestion of drugs such as methadone by children in the past 5 years alone, plus potentially more incidents that don't reach that level of inquiry (Adfam 2014).



People often believe that child resistant medication bottle tops are 'child proof'. These containers can be easily opened, even by some very young children. This includes all medicines and other household items such as mouth washes.

Despite recent serious case reviews, research in 2014 identified unsafe storage practice in the UK. This included medicines which were not kept in lockable containers, and containers not being disposed of properly.

Remember, safe storage is about any harmful household items as well as alcohol, drugs, and medicines.

You can find out more from **Avonsafe**, a partnership which aims to improve the quality of life in the West of England. This is done by helping individuals take control of the risk of injury in their lives, and by tackling risks of injury that are hard for individuals to control themselves. If you are using this leaflet online, find out more about the poison prevention campaign:

<http://www.avon.nhs.uk/phnet/Avonsafe/Accidental%20Poisoning/AP.htm>

Did you know... swallowing a lot of paracetamol mixture or tablets can harm a child's or an adult's liver, and could damage the kidneys.

If you think that any child has taken alcohol, methadone or any other drug/ medicine, however small, ***always ring 999 immediately.***



Key action points

- ✓ Ensure every client has the **'Keeping Children Safe from Poisonous Substances in the Home'** leaflet and talk it through with them. If you don't have a copy, contact B&NES Drug and Alcohol Services on 01225 329411.
- ✓ The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidance on post-natal care safety recommends that parents are advised not to co-sleep with their babies or children after consuming alcohol, smoking, taking drugs or medication as the risk of harm or suffocation increases considerably.
- ✓ If you're doing a **home visit**, check for any risks in the home. If there is a safe storage plan in place, review it to see how it's working in practice.
- ✓ If a safe storage plan is needed, complete a safe storage plan. If you need more information on lockable boxes call: 01225 329411.
- ✓ Attend **Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)** training see page 7 for more information.
- ✓ Need ideas on how to talk with your client about drugs, alcohol and the impact it has on children and young people? Order a copy of **'Drugs, Alcohol and Parenting'**. It's full of tips and practical ways to engage parents in thinking about the impact of their substance use on parenting. See page 6 for more details.

Don't be complacent! *'Home visits to check on compliance are important to embed safe storage practice, and it's also clear that this should be a shared responsibility amongst all agencies involved with the family.'*

(Adfam 2014)

Alcohol, Drugs and Parenting

Any service working with parents who have a substance misuse problem must recognise that children are not necessarily at risk of harm just because a parent uses substances. Many parents are very competent and have the ability to fully address their child's needs.

However, research shows that in some cases substance misuse can lead to significant harm, with damaging and long lasting consequences to children.

In July 2013, there were 61 children in B&NES at significant risk of harm, where parental substance misuse was identified.



Alcohol, Drugs and Pregnancy

The principles of good maternity care, outlined for all pregnant women in the Changing Childbirth Report, should equally apply to pregnant women who are substance users (DOH, 1993). B&NES Drug and Alcohol Services and Maternity Services work together to support pregnant women.



For more information please access this leaflet online <http://www.awp.nhs.uk/media/424818/Substance%20Misuse%20and%20Pregnancy%20Leaflet%20BaNES%20SDAS.pdf>

To contact Community Midwives call 01225 824669 or 01225 825973. The Maternity Unit at the Royal United Hospital (RUH) can also be contacted on: 01225 428331, and ask to speak to the Substance Misuse Specialist Midwife. In addition, to make a referral to B&NES Drug & Alcohol Services call: 01225 329411 (or see page 6 for more details).

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Detailed information about sharing information can be found at <http://www.online-procedures.co.uk/swcpp/> and additionally at <http://bathnes.proceduresonline.com/>



When concerns about a child's safety or welfare require a professional to share confidential information without the person's consent, you should tell the person you intend to do so, unless this may place the child or others at greater risk of harm. The welfare and protection of children is the most important consideration when deciding whether or not to share information with others.

Child Protection: The bottom line

Concern for the safety of the children would be raised if:

- Adults are taking drugs in front of their children, as they are promoting illegal substance use, and there are safety issues.
- Children are becoming involved by the parents in illegal activities such as shop lifting or taking drugs money to other drug users.
- Children are not being supervised adequately because the responsible adult is intoxicated or incapable of looking after a child.
- Children are being exposed to incidents of domestic violence as they themselves could be injured or emotionally harmed.

Read more in the book *Drugs, Alcohol and Parenting 2010* by Mary Glover, which can be ordered from <http://www.exchangesupplies.org>

What happens next if you need to make a referral?

If a referral to B&NES Drugs and Alcohol Services is needed...

✓ **B&NES Drug and Alcohol Services provides a single point of contact** and when an individual has been highlighted as a parent/ or having contact with children a full safeguarding risk assessment will be completed. Contact the B&NES treatment system on 01225 329411 where a **designated safeguarding lead** can be contacted.

If a referral to Children's Social Care is needed...

✓ **Children's Social Care** will apply the assessment framework when undertaking an assessment of children's needs.

✓ If you are a drug/alcohol worker and want to find out more about the assessment process please contact Children's Social Care on **01225 396312 or 01225 396313**. Or check out the 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' online.

✓ There are lots of tools available to help you talk through alcohol or substance use. You could use: the Alcohol AUDIT C screening tool with a parent, Project 28's Young Person's 'Drink Think' tool or the 'Drugs, Alcohol and Parenting' handbook. This handbook can be ordered online from: www.exchangesupplies.org



Effective Engagement

- ✓ Be '**Child focused**' not 'Substance focused'.
- ✓ Consider all household items. Offer advice and assistance in keeping items **out of reach** and **out of sight**. If you need more information on lockable boxes call: 01225 329411.
- ✓ What are the parent's concerns about their children – what support or help can you offer?
- ✓ Together, look at what is **going well** alongside what is **going less well**.
- ✓ What are the **needs of the child**, and how can services support parents to enable those needs to be met?
- ✓ Be open and honest and clear in your **expectations** and concerns, and check out their expectations too.



Have I attended the courses available to me?

B&NES Children's Workforce Training provides lots of training opportunities, which includes:

- ✓ Parent Substance Misuse and Child Protection.
- ✓ Toxic Trio and Child Protection (working with families where Substance Misuse, Domestic Abuse and Parental Mental Health are an issue).
- ✓ To refer or not to refer? To book onto training, please phone **01225 394210** or visit: <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/children-young-people-and-families/childrens-workforce-training/child-protection-training>