

POLICY No: 361	Version 5.0e	Page 1	Last Up-dated: 01 September 2009
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MEDICINES POLICY SAFE STORAGE OF MEDICINES AT THE SERVICE USER'S HOME			

This Policy defines the principles and to be observed for the safe and secure storage of medication in the service user's home. This addresses both non-prescribed ("over-the-counter" - OTC) and prescription medicines, including controlled drugs.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies, as appropriate to circumstances:

Policy No 360 Medicines Policy - *General Policy for Managing Service Users' Medicines*
Policy No 363 Medicines Policy - *Safe Disposal of Unwanted or Out-of-Date Medicines*

1. Medicines must be stored safely and securely out of the reach of children, but still readily accessible by the service user and / or carers, according to need.
2. Medicines must be stored away from sources of heat and light, and in accordance with the instructions on the medicine packaging. The following are important considerations:
 - 2.1 Some medicines may deteriorate if kept in warm damp places such as the kitchen or bathroom.
 - 2.2 Some medicines require refrigerated storage (at or below 4oC). These will include insulin injections and some types of ear drops. Where the medicine labelling defines special storage conditions, and this is not being followed, then care staff should seek advice and guidance from the pharmacy before assisting with medication.
3. Medicines must be stored in the original package produced and labelled by the pharmacy. This can be individual bottles, boxes of blister packs etc, or as pre-filled compliance aids (monitored dosage systems - MDS).
4. Medicines in the service user's home that are not in the original packaging should be brought to the attention of the service user / advocate / responsible family member according to discretion. This can be especially applicable to compliance aids where a family member may fill MDS cartridges with repeat medicines and where such practices have not been contra-indicated in risk assessments.
5. Care staff should check each medication before it is administered to the service user to ensure that the "use by" expiry date has not been exceeded. Out-of-date medicines should be disposed of in accordance with Policy No 363.
6. The hiding of medicines from the service user must ONLY occur where appropriate risk assessments have confirmed a serious risk to the service user's health, well-being and safety. Such a decision can only be taken following appropriate reviews and discussions with the service user's advocate / responsible family member and appropriate health care professionals. The service user's care records must identify the location of any medicines hidden in the service user's home.