



Safer Seven

Your 7-minute safeguarding bulletin

(What is solvent misuse)

1. What is Solvent Misuse?

Solvent misuse affects the lives of thousands of people in the UK. Solvent misuse is the deliberate inhalation of volatile chemicals for the purpose of getting intoxicated or 'high'. The fumes and gases inhaled through their mouth or nose in a variety of ways. Solvents are easily accessible in everyday products such as aerosols and cigarette lighter refills. Inhaling solvents and gases are not in itself illegal although solvent misuse can lead to criminal behaviour such as antisocial behaviour, violence, assault and theft. Research shows solvent misuse and deaths are increasing nationally.

2. Why do people misuse solvents?

Many people mistakenly assume that solvent misuse is safe because the products associated with solvent misuse are legal, accessible and inexpensive. So, they offer the possibility of a fast acting 'high' which usually passes off quickly without a hangover. Solvent misuse could also be a response to problems in other areas of a person's life. Stress, anxiety, bereavement, loneliness etc. Many young people who experiment with gases and solvents do so out of curiosity. Others may be copying older peers or try to fit into a group.

3. Anyone experimenting with gases and solvents is at risk of sudden death.

Death may occur at the first attempt or following many attempts. Due to:

- Choking on vomit.
- Suffocation or asphyxiation – when someone is unable to breathe in sufficient oxygen. This can occur if someone chokes, or if they have a bag or mask over their nose and mouth.
- Burns injuries, as many gases and solvents are highly flammable.
- Fatal accidents, such as being hit by a car or train as your judgement and mobility is impaired.
- A heart condition known as 'Sudden Sniffing Death Syndrome' (SSDS). Most deaths from solvent misuse are caused by SSDS.

4. Recognising solvent misuse: individuals may show signs of:

Slurred speech, Dilated pupils, Euphoria and excitement, Difficulty with coordination, feeling drowsy, dizzy or light-headed, feeling nauseated and not interested in eating, 'Drunken', withdrawn, irritable or inattentive behaviour, Hallucinations and/or delusions and Loss of consciousness / Blackouts.

Evidence of use:

could include a large number of empty gas or aerosol containers (perhaps with teeth marks on the nozzle), or reports of aerosols disappearing from around the home or workplace, stiff towels or pillowcases.

5. What should I do if a client discloses, they are abusing solvents?

- Encourage the young person to seek medical attention promptly and share the disclosure with the GP.
- Consider completing the [Re-Solv Assessment Tool](#) and then upload to the EPRs.
- Complete an urgent Children Social Care referral and share the completed Re-Solv assessment tool
- Complete an In-Phase report
- Inform your line manager and raise to the High-Level Risk Register
- Refer or signpost young person and family to drug and alcohol support services and Re-Solv - UK's solvent misuse charity
- Document on safeguarding palette / template and create a reminder and special note.

6. What is Chroming?

A Tik Tok Trend That Is Deadly.

Chroming is the act of inhaling fumes from aerosol cans, solvents, or other household chemicals to experience a euphoric effect. The term "chroming" originated in Australia and is derived from the inhalation of chrome-based paint; however, it has expanded to include a variety of inhalants. These substances are easily accessible, making them particularly appealing to younger individuals who may be seeking a cheap and readily available way to get high. Other terms have been used 'Sniffing', Huffing or 'Bagging'.

7. Helpful Contacts / Resources:

- NELFT Safeguarding Team
- Children or Adult Social Care
- Re-Solv is the expert charity working across the UK to end solvent misuse - [Re-Solv: UK's Solvent Misuse Charity](#)
- YouTube Video - [What is Chroming](#)
- [Gas & Solvent Use - The Lowdown leaflet](#)
- [NHS - Advice for the families of people who use drugs](#)
- [Re-Solv Parents Guide](#)

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