

Mr M J Pemberton
HM Area Coroner for Manchester West

Monday, 1 September, 2025

Dear Mr Pemberton

Re: Section 28 Report – Prevention of Future Deaths – Mr David Joseph Hayes

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) expresses our sincere condolences following the tragic death of David Hayes, who mistakenly added washing detergent to a cup of tea instead of milk. We note that the inquest concluded with the medical cause of death determined as pneumonitis and aspiration following the ingestion of a chemical substance, and that the death was recorded as accidental. We thank you for highlighting the serious issues raised in your report and welcome the opportunity to outline the actions RoSPA and others are taking to help prevent similar incidents in future. We note your observation that public knowledge of these risks is unlikely to be at a level where households with vulnerable adults are fully aware of the need to safeguard detergents and limit their accessibility.

RoSPA has long been focused on improving consumer awareness around product safety. Since 2013, we have collaborated with the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association (UKCPI) to reduce accidental poisoning in children through our *Take Action Today* campaign. This programme has been highly successful, contributing to an almost 50 per cent reduction in related hospital admissions across the UK.

In 2024, RoSPA submitted a proposal to the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association (UKCPI) to develop a similar initiative focused on vulnerable adults. While that bid was not formally taken forward, we understand that UKCPI is now pursuing activity in this area, including a campaign with organisations such as Age UK, Dementia UK and Alzheimer's Society. This work is exploring improvements in labelling, awareness-raising materials for households, and enhancements to training for the social care workforce, and is expected to begin delivering from Autumn 2025.

As the trade association for the cleaning products sector, UKCPI plays an important role in supporting safe product use, advising members on labelling and regulatory compliance, and promoting consumer safety. RoSPA welcomes their work in this area and sees it as complementary to our own initiatives.



RoSPA is also working in partnership with the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) to deliver an educational initiative focused on preventing accidental poisoning among individuals living with dementia.

This project includes:

- A targeted social media campaign to raise awareness about the risks posed by household chemicals to those with cognitive impairment
- The development of practical guidance for carers on safer storage of these products within the home.

The project is currently in progress and is scheduled for completion in Quarter 4 of the 2025/26 financial year.

We believe that regular assessment of home environments, combined with appropriate training and practical tools for carers, is essential to balancing safety with independence. We also recognise that timely and accurate diagnosis is crucial for planning effective care and support, particularly for individuals living with dementia. While many retain decision-making capacity, safeguarding measures must go beyond simply storing chemicals out of reach, as is typically advised in households with young children.

Our guidance promotes safe storage practices, such as keeping chemicals in their original containers, storing them separately from food and medicines, and using clearly marked cupboards with written or visual signage to indicate their contents. We also encourage manufacturers and regulators to review packaging and labelling practices—avoiding designs that resemble food or drink containers in particular - and to expand existing warnings and plain-language instructions to include the risk posed to vulnerable adults.

We are committed to taking the following actions in response to the issues identified in your report:

- Deliver a national social media campaign to raise awareness of the risks household chemicals pose to individuals with dementia.
→ *By Quarter 4 of the 2025/26 financial year (funded by OPSS)*
- Develop practical guidance for carers on the safe storage and handling of hazardous substances in the home.
→ *By Quarter 4 of the 2025/26 financial year (funded by OPSS)*
- Promote safe storage practices through our guidance and public messaging, including:
 - Keeping chemicals in original containers
 - Storing them separately from food and medicines
 - Using clearly marked cupboards with written or visual signage→ *By Quarter 4 of the 2025/26 financial year (funded by OPSS)*





accidents don't have to happen

RoSPA
28 Calthorpe Road
Birmingham, B15 1RP
United Kingdom

Patron: His Majesty The King

- Engage with manufacturers and regulators to encourage:
 - Packaging that avoids resemblance to food or drink
 - Clear warnings and plain-language instructions addressing risks to vulnerable adults

→ *Initial engagement during 2025; ongoing advocacy thereafter.*

RoSPA is committed to reducing accidents in the home, particularly among those most at risk. We thank you for your attention to this matter and assure you that we are taking active steps to reduce the likelihood of future tragedies such as the one involving Mr Hayes.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

CEO

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

