

Do you work at night?



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Look after yourself

Eat the right things, at the right time, to feel more energised and awake.

Eat a light meal around midnight. Cut down on carbohydrates, and eat more protein.

Boost your energy levels with a light snack in the 'sleepy hours' between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m.

De-stress

Night can be a time when staff, residents and relatives worry.

You can help yourself to worry less if you have the right support, and the right information.

Talk to other staff, and to managers, about anything that's worrying you.

Take up any training on offer. The more you know, the more confident you will feel.

Learn about health and safety and emergency procedures. Don't leave it until something happens.

Who says so?

This poster, one of a set of four, is based on the views of staff and residents who were interviewed by Dr Heather Wilkinson, Diana Kerr and Colm Cunningham from Edinburgh University. They wanted to find out how people in care homes at night could be supported. The work was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.



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Sweet dreams...



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Many residents have trouble sleeping at night. Noise is one reason why.

Help your residents to have a peaceful night. Remember to:

- Talk quietly in corridors and near people's rooms.
- Open and shut doors quietly.
- Avoid unnecessary trips up and down corridors, especially with a noisy trolley.
- Stop your keys from jangling!

Get management to help

If you notice a noise that is disturbing residents, mention it to managers. Things like a creaky door or a squeaky floorboard should be fixed. You could also discuss ideas like using pagers instead of buzzers.

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“Are you OK?”



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Checking residents at night

Some residents like staff to pop in at night. Others find it scary and confusing.

So how can you make things easier for them?

- Enter the room quietly. Wake them up gently, and only if necessary.
- Keep the lights low – use a torch, or a night light.
- Reassure the resident, and explain what you are doing.
- Keep the number of carers in the room to a minimum.
- Don't check as a matter of routine but only if you know it is necessary – the care plan should make this clear.

Be aware of individual preferences for male or female carers, and follow this if possible.

Planning ahead

Night-time care plans should be included in a resident's individual care plan.

Carry out a night-time risk assessment for each resident.

Discuss the night checking policy with your manager.

Make sure there are enough night-time incontinence pads available, so that most people will not need changing.

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Night-time help for people with dementia

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Helping people through the night

Night staff have the opportunity to help people with dementia to have calmer, less disturbed nights.

Residents with dementia often get up at night, and feel quite confused. You will be there at this difficult time, and can help improve their general health and well-being.

A friendly face

Residents with dementia may wake up upset by distressing memories or thoughts.

Try to distract them by taking them for a short walk, and chatting to them about everyday things.

If you're not sure what they want or mean, give them some extra attention. Be patient – with a little thought you may be able to work it out. Is it possible they are in pain?

Help and support

Many people with dementia have problems eating and drinking. Place food and drink where residents can see and reach it, keep an eye on them and remind them it's there.

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