

# Privacy and Choice

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- Privacy & Choice**



Moving into a care home can provide safety, security and companionship for older people. But they may also fear losing control, independence and their privacy. Your role in protecting people's privacy and their ability to choose how they live their life is as important as the care you give.

Check the care plan for what matters to them over privacy and decision making and be ready to listen to their views. We can all change our minds, so remember always to ask.

## PROTECTING PEOPLE'S PRIVACY AND CHOICE IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT

Care homes must ensure that they protect people's privacy and their right to choice. *The Health & Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: No 9 Person Centred Care, No 10 Dignity and respect, No 11 Need for consent, No 13 Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment.*

### It's my private space

Privacy matters to everyone and for most of us our bedrooms are the most private places of all. It's important to respect people's personal space and how they might want to use it. Be sure you have their consent before going into their room, or before moving any of their possessions. Protect their right:

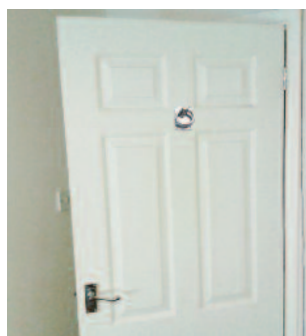
- ✎ to choose whether to have their door shut or open. People may change their preference depending on what they are doing or how they are feeling;
- ✎ to have private conversations, such as with a visitor or talking on the telephone;
- ✎ not to have unwanted people entering their rooms, such as other residents, staff or visitors.

### It's my body

Washing, dressing or seeing to our continence needs are deeply personal and even if a person has lost their ability to communicate, they may find it embarrassing. The sensitive way we help people with these personal daily needs can make everyone feel more comfortable and protect people's dignity. Take a little time and care to help them do what they can for themselves, to ensure they cannot be seen by others when washing, toileting or dressing. Taking care they always have their own clothes, as well as helping them look as well groomed as they would like, can turn personal care into a rewarding activity.

### It's my home

The care home is your place of work, but their home. It can be complex trying to match people's differing needs and wants in communal areas, but just as in your own home, everyone must feel they can choose how and



#### GOOD PRACTICE

Simple changes can make a big difference. The Order of St John Care Trust fitted door knockers on residents' room doors, to make them look more like front doors and reinforce the need to ask permission before entering the rooms.

(see [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk))

## Keynotes

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### WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO

Mr Kanu's hearing loss left him isolated till Kevin, his keyworker, brought him a white board to try. Now he and Mr Kanu were able to talk about books he liked to read and Kevin arranged for the mobile library to visit him at the home.

where they spend their time and who with. Make sure people can talk to each other privately, not feel threatened by other residents, staff or visitors and sit alone if they wish.

### It's my choice

Making sure people have control of things we take for granted, such as when to see or contact friends and family, when to go to bed, when to get up, go for a walk or where to sit, when, where and what to eat, when to go to the toilet or have a shower, can help people feel valued and boost their confidence and sense of dignity. It can be fun too, a time when you can build relationships as you help a person choose what to wear or whether to go out in the garden.

Giving control to people with the everyday things can help them express more complex wishes, and encourage them to join in other activities or areas of home life.

You can't be with them all the time. When they are alone, is their call bell or telephone in reach, can they get refreshments, can they turn off the radio, or pick up the book they were reading?

### Shared decisions

You will want to share with colleagues, especially at handover; any simple choices which call for a temporary change of routine, diet or activity, while more complex decisions needing further action over medical treatment, risk taking or sensitive family issues must be reported to your manager.

### Confidential information

As a care worker, you will be trusted with sensitive information, whether by a resident, or family member; another staff member or visiting professional or while documenting or viewing personal records. Always avoid discussing personal information in public places, and keep personal records safe and away from public view. Ensure you share the information with only people who need to know and respect the resident's privacy and trust.

Remember you must report immediately, usually to your manager; any incident you have been told about or seen which you believe puts someone at risk.

### NOT TODAY

Mr Khan had limited speech after a stroke. Usually he liked his door open to watch people go by but today when Jeff asked him he looked away and pulled his dressing gown closer. So Jeff sat beside him and asked if he would prefer it shut this morning. A nod and smile confirmed it. Jeff closed his door and let other staff know.



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