Living well through activity in care homes: the toolkit

INTRODUCTION
Click here
Getting older is not a disease or a condition and we do not lose the ability to make choices, learn or experience love and affection.

Moving into a care home is a major life event and we all share the same desire to live in a safe and comfortable environment.

All older people living in care homes have the right to:
- Experience a good home life.
- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Access quality care and treatments.

Everyone wants to continue to do the activities they enjoy.

This toolkit is endorsed by:
This toolkit has been designed to equip care homes with ideas and materials in order for them to provide a service focused on residents’ needs, preferences and activity choices.

Throughout this toolkit, where it is recommended that specialist occupational therapy advice is required, this text will be highlighted in green. It will also link to the College of Occupational Therapists’ website, where there are many resources and further information.

The guide for residents, their family and friends offers advice on best practice in terms of residents’ rights to engage in daily activities that support their health and wellbeing.

**All older people living in care homes have the right to:**

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- Be treated with dignity and respect.
- Access quality care and treatments.
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External reference group
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Pilot sites
With thanks to the owners, managers, staff, residents and families of:
- Abbeyfield Care Home, Ballachulish, Argyll
- Beachcomber Care Home, Seaham
- Nightingale House, London
- The Granary Dementia Care Centre, Wraxall
- The Russets, Sandford Station Retirement Village
- West House, Chester-le-Street.
Living well through activity in care homes: occupational therapists
Welcome to the Living well through activity in care homes toolkit.

This section of the toolkit is aimed specifically at occupational therapists and does not repeat or include information from the other sections.

The role of occupational therapists in care homes

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE 2008) recommends that older people should be offered regular group and/or individual sessions to identify, construct, rehearse and carry out daily routines and activities that can help to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing. In addition, it is recommended that occupational therapists should be involved in the design and development of locally relevant training schemes for those working with older people. This would ensure that care staff have the skills to support older people to carry out daily routines and maintain their independence.

(COT 2013)

This toolkit provides a range of prompts, guidance and material for occupational therapists to support and develop training schemes in line with the NICE recommendation.
Reasons for developing a toolkit on activity

Evidence from the Institute for Public Policy Research (2008) suggests that older people living in care homes experience low levels of life satisfaction and wellbeing. Further research by the Alzheimer’s Society (2007) supports this, and polling by Demos (2013) reveals people associate care homes with ‘boredom’ (48%), ‘loneliness’ (42%) and ‘illness’ (38%). In response to older people not having sufficient access to activities, NICE has developed quality standards covering the Mental wellbeing of older people in care homes (NICE 2013) that address this issue.

The NICE quality standards include the following statements:

1. **Older people in care homes are offered opportunities during their day to participate in meaningful activity that promotes their health and mental wellbeing.**

   This statement draws on the Living well through activity in care homes toolkit to define meaningful activity as activities that provide emotional, creative, intellectual and spiritual stimulation. The guide for residents, their family and friends outlines how to talk to staff about getting their needs and preferences met. The section for care home staff explores ideas for activities; balancing risk and choice; and how to motivate residents.

2. **Older people in care homes are enabled to maintain and develop their personal identity.**

   The sections included in this toolkit for care home managers titled Using the business case to shape culture and How do we measure quality? provide materials on shaping the culture to ensure dignity and choice for residents. The information included in The guide for residents, their family and friends supports people to talk to care home staff about the opportunities and choices they would like to make to shape their daily life.
Living well through activity in care homes: occupational therapists

Occupational therapists are currently working with care homes through a number of different routes. For example, they may be directly employed by a care home company, provide in-reach training, receive referrals from care homes, or respond to safeguarding alerts.

Occupational therapists can actively help to support and sustain a positive change in the culture of care homes by recommending that this toolkit is utilised in a variety of ways by:

- Offering *The guide for residents, their family and friends* to people preparing to move into a care home.
- Introducing the *Enabling activity audit tool* to managers.
- Using the resources in the care home staff section as training handouts.
- Encouraging care homes to develop a resource file to support day-to-day activities.
- Highlighting to care home owners and managers the added value of occupational therapy.
- Raising the profile of occupational therapists, enabling care home staff to gain access to specialist guidance and advice on adaptations, strategies and techniques to help residents maximise their abilities.

In the other sections of the toolkit, this symbol has been included to signpost when occupational therapy expertise is required.
Living well through activity in care homes: occupational therapists

Supporting Practice – Evidence and Research (SPEaR)

BAOT members are able to access specific materials on legislation and policy, resources produced by the College, and signposting to relevant research by accessing the Supporting Practice - Evidence and Research (SPEaR) page on the COT website. This information is regularly updated and new resources added.

Topics include:

- Avoiding unplanned hospital admissions
- Care homes
- Dementia
- End of life care
- Falls management
- Learning disabilities
- Multiple sclerosis
- Outcomes
- Parkinson’s disease
- Reablement
- Rheumatology
- Stroke
- Telecare

CARE HOMES AND OT SPEaR WEB PAGE
Briefings

Briefings provide up-to-date guidance and reference material to enable occupational therapists to remain informed and aware of changes and developments relating to practice in all four nations.

Briefings that are relevant for occupational therapists working in or with the care home sector are available for BAOT members to download from the website and can be found under the following headings:

**Older people and long-term conditions, including:**
- Assistive technology in care homes
- Cognitive stimulation therapy
- Dementia: adapting the care home environment
- Dementia, delirium and depression
- Dementia: meaningful activity
- Discharge planning
- Measuring mental wellbeing in older people
- Occupational therapy and end of life care for adults
- Safeguarding in care homes

**Organisation and management of OT services, including:**
- Management briefing: writing a business case.
- Measuring outcomes.

**Various aspects of OT, including:**
- Definitions and core skills of occupational therapy
Living well through activity in care homes: occupational therapists

What next?

Suggestions from members on what further resources to consider are welcomed to ensure that members are provided with the evidence they require to increase access to occupational therapists in care homes.

To suggest new materials for consideration or to share your experiences and materials of best practice contact:

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References


